

## THE INDIAN TEMPLE

Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy

The nature of the present symposium demands the use of atleast single illustration, but the reader is asked to understand that my subject in the present short article is really that of *the Hindu Temple*, irrespective of period and relative complexity or simplicity. The choice of this subject is one that is made especially appropriate by the recent publication of Dr. Stella Kramrisch's magnificent work, *The Hindu Temple* (Calcutta, 1946, 2 vols., qto, with 80 plates).

It may be remarked, in the first place, that the most essential part of the concept of a temple is that of an altar on which, or hearth in which, offerings can be made to an invisible presence that may or may not be represented iconographically. The types of the oldest shrines are those of the "Stone-tables"<sup>1</sup> of megalithic cults and those of the stone altars of tree pillars cults;<sup>2</sup> or the shrine may be a hearth, the burnt offering being conveyed to the Gods with the smoke of the fire, Agni thus functioning as missal priest. In all these cases the shrine, even when the shrine is walled or fenced about, remains hypaethral

open to the sky.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand the oldest Indian type of sacred architecture both enclosed and roofed is that of the Sadas ("seat", the sacrificial operation being itself a *sattra*, "Session") of the Vedic sacrifice or Mass; made only for temporary use, this enclosure is a place "apart" (*tiras-antharihita*) to which the Gods resort and in which the sacrificer, having put on "the garment of initiation and ardost", sleeps, becoming "as it were one of themselves" for the time being; he becomes, indeed, an embryo, and is re-born from the sacred enclosure as from a womb.<sup>4</sup> This "hut or hall is a microcosm", of which the corners, for example, are called "the four quarters".<sup>5</sup> At the same time it must be recognized that no fundamental distinction can be made between the God-house as such and the dwellings of men, whether huts or palaces; as is evident in the case of in those cultures, notably the Indian, in which the Paterfamilias himself officiates as household priest, daily performing the Agnihotra in the domestic circle.

In addition to this it must be realised that in India, as elsewhere, not only are temples made with hands the universe in a likeness, but man himself is likewise a microcosm and a

1. Cf. J. Layard, *Stone Men of Malekula*, 1942, pp. 625, 701 on dolmens as altars, used also as seats.

2. Cf. my *Yaksas I*, Washington 1928, p. 17.

3. Cf. my *Early Indian Architecture*, II "Bodhiharas", in *Eastern Art II*, 1930. (as applied to Cynics and Indian Gymnosophists)= *Abbhokasika* (as applied to Buddhist monks) of *Vivatta-chado* ("whose roof has been opened up", *sadi* of a Buddha).

4. SB 3.1.1.8, 3.1.3.28, TS 6.1.1.1, 6.2.5.5. etc.

5. TS 6.1.1.1. with Keith's comment in *HOS* 19.483, Note 4.



“holy temple”<sup>6</sup> or “City of God” (*brahma-pura*).<sup>7</sup> The body, the temple, and the universe being thus analogous, it follows that whatever worship is outwardly and visibly performed can also be celebrated inwardly and invisibly, the “gross” ritual being, in fact, no more than a tool or support of contemplation; the external means having, just as had been the case in Greece, for its “end and aim the knowledge of Him who is the First, the Lord, and the Intelligible”<sup>7A</sup>—as distinguished from the visible. It is recognised, of course, that “the whole earth is divine”, i.e., potentially an altar, but that a place is necessarily selected and prepared for an actual sacrifice, the validity of such a site depending not upon the site itself but on that of the sacerdotal art; and such a site is always theoretically both on a high place and at the centre, or “navel” of the earth, with an eastward orientation, since it is “from the east west-wards that the Gods come unto men.”<sup>8</sup>

It is constantly emphasized, accordingly, that the sacrifice is essentially a mental operation, to be performed both outwardly, and inwardly, or in any case inwardly. It is prepared by the sacrificer’s “whole mind and whole self”, the sacrificer is as it were emptied out of himself, and is himself the real victim.<sup>9</sup> The true end of the cult is one of reintegration and resurrection, attainable not by a merely mechanical performance of the service, but by a full realisation of its significance, or even by this comprehension alone.<sup>10</sup> The Agnihotra, or burnt-offering, for example, may be, and is for the comprehensor, an interior self-sacrifice, in which the heart is the altar, the

outer man the offering, and the flame, the dompted self.<sup>11</sup>

The human frame, the constructed temple, and the universe being analogical equivalents, the parts of the temple correspond to those of the human body no less than to those of the universe itself.<sup>12</sup> All these dimensioned (*nirmita*, *vimitia*) forms are explicitly “houses”, indwelt and filled by an invisible presence and representing its possibilities of manifestation in time and space; their *raison d’être* is that it may be known. For this unifying and constructive principle, the spirit or self of all beings, is only apparently confined by its habitations which, like other images, serve as supports of contemplation; none being ends in themselves but more or less indispensable means to liberation from every sort of enclosure. The position, in other words, is primarily iconolatrous, but teleologically iconoclastic.

Each of the “houses” we are considering is dimensioned and limited in six directions—nadir, quarters, and zenith; the feet, floor, or earth,—bulk, interior space, or atmospheric space,—and cranium, roof, or sky defining the extent of this one or two particular aspects of these and other analogies. The temple has, for example, windows and doors from which the indweller can look out and go forth, or conversely return to himself; and these correspond in the body to the “doors of the senses” through which one can either look out in times of activity, or from which one can return to the “heart” of one’s being when the senses are withdrawn from their objects in concentration. There is however, in theory, another door or window, accessible only by a “ladder” or the “rope” by which our being

6. I Cor. 3.16, 17.

7. AV 10.2.30, CU 8.1.1-5.

7A. Plutarch, *Moralia* 352A.

8. SB 1.1.2.23, 3.1.1.1.4.

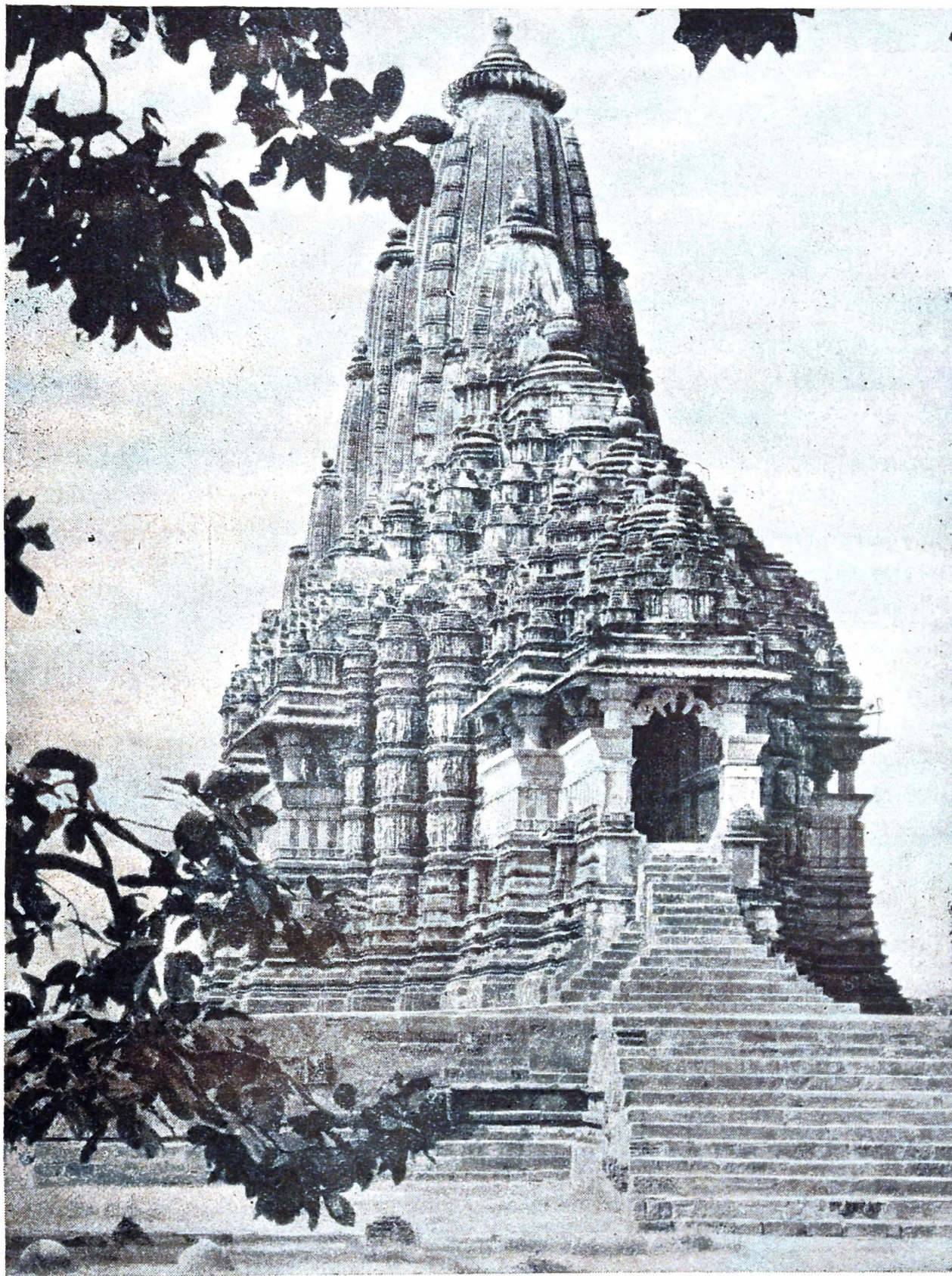
9. SB 2.4.1.11, 3.3.4.21, 3.8.1.2, 9.5.1.53.

10. SB 10.4.2.31, 10.1.3.24.

11. SA 10; SB 10.5.3.12; *Samyutta Nikaya* 1.169.

12. Cf. Stella Kramrisch, *The Hindu Temple* 1946: pp. 357.





*Khajuraho*

*Kandarpa (Shiva) Temple*



is suspended from above, and through which one can emerge from the dimensioned structure so as to be no longer on a level with its ground, or within it, but altogether above it. In man, this exit is represented by the cranial foramen, which is still unclosed at birth, and that is opened up again at death when the skull is ritually broken, though as regards its significance it may be kept open throughout one's life by appropriate spiritual exercises, for this God-aperture (*brahma-randhra*) corresponds to the "eye" or "point" of the heart, the microcosmic city of God (*brahmapura*) within you, from which the Spirit departs at death.<sup>13</sup> Architecturally, the *brahma-randhra* or for a man of the human cranium or man-made temple corresponds to the luffer, smoke-hole, or skylight (*Lichtloch*) of the traditional house; and in some ancient and relatively modern Western temples this "oculus" of the dome still remains an open circular window, and the structure therefore "hypaethral".<sup>14</sup> In the early Indian timbered domes the opening

above is apparently closed by the circular roof-plate (*kannika*) on which the rafters rest like the spokes of a wheel or ribs of an umbrella, but this plate is perforated, and in any case functions as a doorway or place of exit through which the Perfected (Arahants) movers at-will and "sky-farers" are repeatedly described as making their departure: it is an "upper-door" (*agga-dvara*).<sup>15</sup> In later Indian lithic structures in the same way the summit of the spire is apparently closed by a circular stone slab (*amalaka*), but this, too, is perforated for the re-reception of the tenon of the finial which prolongs the central axis of the whole structure; and the term *brahma-randra* remains in use. Finally, in the world of which the sky is the roof, the Sun himself is the Janua Coeli, "the gateway of liberation"

13. BU 4.4.2; CU 8.1.1-4; Hamsa Up. 1.3. For the breaking of the skull Garuda Purana 10.56-59 (*bhitva brahma-randhrakam* corresponding to *bhitva kannika-mandalam* architecturally, Dha 3.66, and to *bhitva surya-mandalam* ("breaking through the solar disk") macrocosmically, MU 6.30. In the Purana this breaking through represents explicitly the rebirth of the deceased from the sacrificial fire in which the body is burnt; cf. JUB 3.11.7.

For the "eye of the heart" cf. Comenius, *The Labyrinth of the World* (1631, based on J. V. Andreae, *Civis Christianus*), tr. by Spinka, Chicago 1942, chs 37, 38, 10 ("in the vault of this my chamber, a large round window above", approachable only by ladders, and through which on the one hand Christ looks down from above and on the other "one could peer out into the beyond").

14. For instance, the Roman Pantheon; cf. Piranesia's engraving of the Tempio della Tossa. "Even to-day lest he (Terminus) see aught above him but the stars, have temple roofs their tiny aperture" (*exiguum... foramen*, Ovid, *Fast.* 2.667). For Islamic architecture, cf. E. Diez in *Arts Islamiques* 5. pp. 39, 45, "space was the primary problem and was placed in relation to, and dependence on, infinite space by means of the widely open opening in the zenith of the cupola. This relation to open space was always emphasized by the skylight lantern in Western architecture... Islamic art appears as the individuation of its metaphysical basis (uncendliche Grund)".

15. See my "Palli Kannika: Circular Roof-plate", *JAOs* 50, 1930; "The Symbolism of the Dome", *IHQ* 14, 1938 (pt. 3) "*Srayamatrnnā; Janua Coeli*" *Zalmoris* 2, 1939; and for the *agga-dvara*, "Some Sources of Buddhist Iconography", *B.C. Law Volume*, I, 1945. p. 473, note 12. For exit via the roof of Odyssey 1.320 where Athene, leaving Odysseus' house, "flew like a bird through the oculus".

—Hesychis<sup>o</sup>; Cross and Slover, *Ancient Irish Tales*, 1936, p. 92 ["And he (the god Midir) carried her (Etain) off through the smoke-hole of the house, and they saw two swans circling"]; and H. Rink, *Tales and Traditions of the Eskimos*, 1875, pp. 60, 61, (when "the angakok (shaman) had to make a flight, he started through an opening which appeared of itself in the roof").

To *Pali kannika* corresponds Gk. (Pausanias, 8.8.9 and 9.35.7); and it is through the cosprie) that the Man, the Son of God, looks down, and descends (Hermes Trismegistos, Lib. 1.14). And just as the *kannika* is a symbol of *samadhi*, "synthesis", so is this Greek capstone a "harmony", as Pausanias says, "of the whole edifice".

In connection with the term *agga-dvara* it may be observed that *agga* (= *agra*, cf. *Phaedrus* 247 B and Philo, *Opif.* 71), "summit" is predicted of the Buddha (A 2.17, D 3.147), who "opens the doors of immortality" vin, 1.7, D 2.33, CM 1.167) and is in this sense a "Door-god", like Agni (AB3.42) and like Christ (John 10.9, St. Th. Aquinas, *Sum. Theol.* III. 49.5); this Janua Coeli being the door at which the Buddha's are said to stand and knock (S 2.58). Further pertinent material will be found in P. Sartori, "Das Dach in Volksglauben", *Zeit. des Vereins f. Volkskunde*, 25, 1915, pp. 228-241; K. Rhamm as reviewed by V. Ritter V. Geramb, *ib.* 26, 1916; R. Guenon, "Le symbolisme du dome", *Etudes Traditionnelles* 43, 1938; F. J. Tirtsch, "False Doors in Tombs", *JHS* LXIII, 1943, pp. 113-115; and more generally in W. R. Lethaby, *Architecture, Mysticism, and Myth*, 1892.



(*moksa-dvara*) the only way by which to break out of the dimensioned universe, and so "escape altogether."<sup>17</sup>

We have considered so far the altar (always in some sense a sacrificial hearth, analogous to the "heart") and the oculus of the dome (always in some sense a symbol of the all-seeing and all-illuminating Sun) as the proximate and ultimate goals of the worshipper who comes to visit the deity whose man-made "house" the temple is, there to devote himself. The altar, like the sacred hearth, is always theoretically at the centre or "navel" of the earth and the solar eye of the dome always in the centre of the ceiling or *coelum* immediately above it: and these two are connected in principle, as in some early structure they were in fact, by an axial pillar at once uniting and separating floor and roof, and supporting the latter; as it was in the beginning, when heaven and earth, that had been one, were "pillared apart" by the Creator.<sup>18</sup> It is by this pillar, regarded as a bridge<sup>19</sup> or ladder, or because of its immateriality, like a bird on wings,<sup>20</sup> and in any case from its base—for "there is no side path here in the world"<sup>21</sup>—that the "hard ascent after Agni" (*durohana, agner anvarohah*)<sup>22</sup> must be made from below to the Sun door above: an ascent that is also imitated in countless climbing rites, and notably in that of the ascent of the sacrificial post (*yupa*) by the

sacrificer who, when he reaches its summit and raises his head above its capital, says, on behalf of himself and his wife; "We have reached the Heaven, reached the Gods; we have become immortals, become the children of *Prajapati*".<sup>23</sup> For them the distance that separates heaven from earth is temporarily annihilated: the bridge lies behind them.

The nature and full significance of the cosmic pillar (*skambha*), the Axis Mundi referred to above, can best be grasped from its description in *Atharva Veda* 10.7, and 8;<sup>24</sup> or understood in terms of the Islamic doctrine of the *Qutb*, with which the Perfect Man is identified, and on which all things turn. In the Vedic *Sadas* it is represented by the King-Post (*stunaraja*, or *sala-vamsa*) which the sacrificer himself erects, and that stands for the Median Breath;<sup>25</sup> and in the same way within you, as the axial principle of one's own life and being.<sup>26</sup> In the Vedic (Fire—) altar, a constructed image of the universe, this is also the axial principle that passes through the three "self-perforated bricks" (*svayamatrnnā*), of which the uppermost corresponds to the Sundoor of the later texts: an axis that—like Jacob's ladder—is "the way up and down these worlds". In visiting the deity whose image or symbol has been set up in the womb of the temple the worshipper is returning to the heart and centre of his own being to perform a devotion that prefigures his ultimate resurrection and regeneration

17. JUB 1.3.5, i.e. "through the midst of the Sun", ib. 1.6.1. the Janua Coeli, ib. 1.14.5, 4.15.4, 5, or "Sundoor" of MU 6.30, and Mund. Up. 1.2.11.

18. Ry passim. In general, the axial column of the universe is a pillar (*mita, sthupa, vamsa, skambha*, etc.) of Fire (RV 1.59.1, 4.5.1, 10.5.6) or Life (RV 10.5.6) or Solar Light (JUB 1.10.10), Breath or Spirit (*pranah*, passim), i.e., the Self (*atman*, BU 4.4.22). The primordial separation of Heaven and Earth is common to the creation myths of the whole world.

19. D. L. Coomaraswamy, "The Perilous Bridge of Welfare", HJAS 8, 1944.

20. PB 5.3.5.

21. MU 6. 30.

22 TS 5.6.8, AB 4.20-22

23. TS 1.7.9, 5.6.8, 6.6.4.2; SB 5.2.1.5. Cf. in my "Svayamatrnnā: Janua Coeli", *loc cit* pp. 13. 11.

24. AV 10. 7. 35 and 8.2, "The Skambha sustains both heaven and earth... and hath inhabited all existences.... Whereby these twain are pillared apart, therein is all this that is enspirited (*atmanrat*), all that breathes and blinks".

25. AA 3.1.4, 3.2.1; SA 8; of in my "Sunkiss", JAOS 60, 1940, p. 58 with note 30.

26. BU 2.2.1 where in subtle and gross bodies of individuals. "the Median Breath is the pillar" (*madhyamah pranah* —*Sthana*



from the funeral pyre in which the last sacrifice is made.

We are thus brought back again to the concept of the three analogous—bodily, architectural, and cosmic—“houses” that the Spirit of Life inhabits and fills; and recognise at the same time that the values of the oldest architectural symbolism are fully preserved in the latest buildings and serve to explain their use.<sup>27</sup> I shall only emphasize in conclusion, what has already been implied, that the Indian architectural symbolism shortly outlined above, is by no means peculiarly or exclusively Indian, but rather worldwide. For example, that the sacred structure is a microcosm, the world in a likeness, is explicit amongst the American Indians: as remarked by Sartori, “*Bei den Huichol-Indianern. . . der Tempel gilt Abbilder Welt, das Dach als Himmel, und die Zeremonien, die beim Bau vollzogen werden, beziehen sich fast alle auf diese Bedeutung*,”<sup>28</sup> and as related by Speck in his description of the Delaware “Big-House”, “the Big-House stands for the universe; its floor, the earth; its four walls, the four quarters; its vault, the sky-dome atop, where resides the Creator in his indefinable supremacy . . . the centre-post is the staff of the Great Spirit with its foot upon the earth, with its pinnacle reaching to the hand of the Supreme Being sitting on his

throne.”<sup>29</sup> In the same way, from the Indian point of view, with respect to the way up and down: “Within these two movements the Hindu temple has its being; its central pillar is erected from the heart of the *Vastupurusa* in the *Brahmasthan*, from the centre and heart of existence on earth, and supports the *Prasada Purusa* in the Golden Jar in the splendour of the Empyrean.”<sup>30</sup>

Finally in as much as the temple is the universe in a likeness, its dark interior is occupied only by a single image or symbol of the informing spirit; while externally, its walls are covered with representations of the divine powers in all their manifested multiplicity. In visiting the shrine, one proceeds inwards from multiplicity to unity, just as in contemplation; and on returning again to the outer world, sees that one has been surrounded by all the innumerable forms that the Sole Seer and Agent within assumes in his playful activity. And this distinction between the outer world and the inner shrine of an Indian temple, into which one enters “so as to be born again from its dark womb”<sup>31</sup> is the same that Plotinus makes, when he observes that the seer of the supreme, being one with his vision, “like one who,

---

symbolical function and thus belongs to the oldest religious elements of North America”.

On the importance of the centre-post of, also Strzygowski, *Early Church Art in Northern Europe*, 1928, p. 141, in connection with “the Mast-Churches of Norway”; The steeple marking the apex of the perpendicular axis appears to be a relic of the time when the only type was the one-mast church. For China, of G. Ecke, “Once More Shen-T’ung Ssu and Ling-Yen Ssu”, *Monumenta Serica* 7, 1942 295 ff. Cf. the invocatory verse of the *Dasakumaracarita*; “May the staff of His foot, the Three-strider’s (Vishnu), bear thee across,—viz., the staff of the umbrella of the Brahmanda, the stalk of the Hundred-Sacrificer’s (Brahma’s) cosmic lotus, the mast of the ship of the earth, the flag-pole of the banner of the nectar-shedding river, the pole of the axis of the planetary sphere, the pillar of victory over the three worlds, and death-dealing club of the foes of the Gods.—may this be thy means of crossing over”.

30. Stella Kramrisch, *loc. cit.* p. 360.

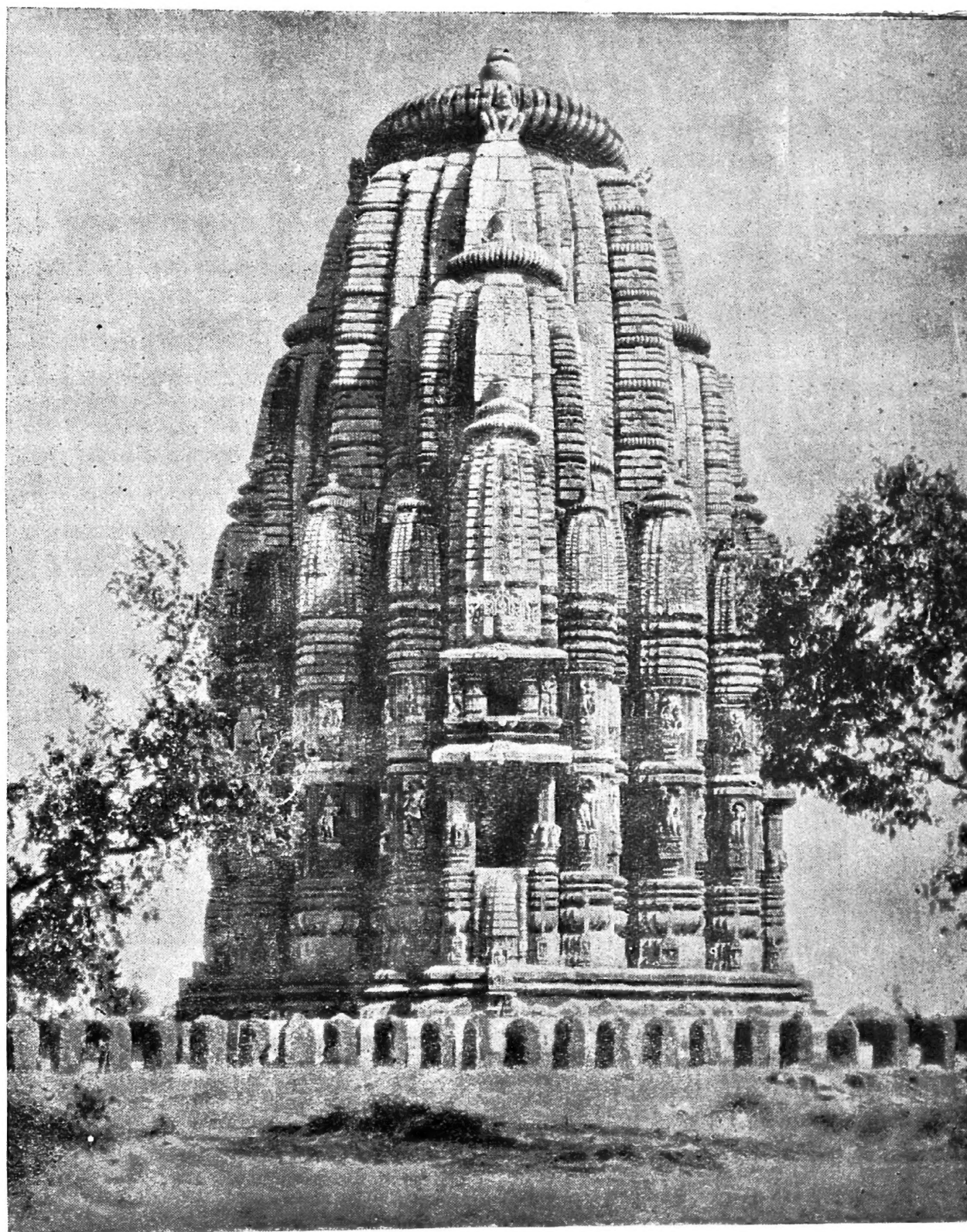
31. Stella Kramrisch, *loc. cit.* p. 368.

27. “In effet, il est bien connu que la construction de l’autel du feu est un sacrifice personnel de grande activité artistique de l’Inde s’est toujours ressenti, nous l’avons reconnu, de ce que la première œuvre d’art brahmanique ait été un autel ou le donataire, autrement dit le sacrificant, s’unissait à son dieu”. p. Mus. *Barabudur*, 1, 1935, pp. \*92, \*994.

28. P. Sartori, *loc. cit.* p. 233.

29. F. G. Speck, on the Delaware Big-House, cited from Publications of Pennsylvania Historical Commission, vol. 2, 1931, by Father W. Schmidt, *High Gods of North America*, 1933, p. 75. Father Schmidt remarks, p. 78. “The Delawares are perfectly right in affirming this, the fundamental importance of the centre-post”, points out that the same holds good for many other Indian tribes, amongst whom “the centre post of the ceremonial hut was a quite similar





*Bhubaneswar*

*Raja Rani—Temple*



having penetrated to the inner sanctuary, leaves the temple images behind him—though these become once more the object of his first regard when he leaves the holies; for there his converse was not with image, not with trace, but with the very Truth".<sup>32</sup> In the last analysis, the ritual, like that of the old in the last analysis, the ritual, like that of the old Vedic sacrifice, is an interior procedure, of which the outward forms are only a support, indispensable for those who being still on their way have not yet reached its end, but that can be dispensed with by those who have already found it and though they may be still in the world are not of it. The deity who assumes innumerable forms, and yet has no form is one and the same *Purusa*, and to

worship in either way leads to the same liberation; "However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them".<sup>33</sup> In the meantime, there can be no greater danger or hindrance than that of the premature iconoclasm of those who still confuse their own existence with their own being, and have not yet "known the self";<sup>34</sup> these are the vast majority, and for them the temple and all its figurations are sign-posts on their way.

33. *Bhagavad Gita* 4.11.

34. "Agni, Vayu, Aditya—Brahma, Rudra, and Vishnu . . . these are, assuredly, the foremost forms of the immortal, incorporeal Brahma. . . . And, verily, on these His foremost forms one should meditate and after having lauded them deny. For by them one moves higher and higher in these worlds. But in the final dissolution he attains the Unity of the Person. yeas, of the Person" (MU 4.6).

Acts of worship pertain to the *via affirmationis*; the *via remotionis* is that of their entelechy.

32. Plotinus, *Enneads*. 6.99.11.







*Dr. Annie Besant.*

*From A Bronze Bust  
By D. P. Roy Chowdhury.*



# DR. ANNIE BESANT'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURAL MOVEMENT IN INDIA

*Dr. G. Srinivasamurti*

“**F**resh and vivid as dawn itself is my recollection of the rapture that entranced my lyric girlhood when nearly thirty years ago I first set my eyes on Annie Besant and heard her speak in fervent praise of Ancient Hindu Culture. To my young romantic fancy, this dazzling pilgrim from the west with the glamour of her radiant presence and the magic of her golden speech seemed the living embodiment of all the brave and splendid women of old Greek and Norse and Gaelic legend offering proud and joyous homage to the Eternal genius of India.” It was in these words of iridescent beauty that Srimathi Sarojini Devi wrote rapturously in 1924 of Dr. Besant’s contribution to the Cultural movement in India and of the loving homage paid by this “dazzling pilgrim from the West” to the sacred land of India which she adopted as her spiritual motherland. “Dazzling pilgrim” she undoubtedly was; and it was with the attitude of a devout and pious pilgrim journeying to the Holy Land that she undertook her first journey to India. On the 6th of November of 1893, ten days before she first set her foot on the soil of India, she delivered an address on board the “Kaiser-i-Hind” to an audience consisting largely of Britishers, on the subject of “India, I know” when she said : “Your India and mine are probably divergent. You know her, many of you, by taking part in the foreign government by which she is subjugated; and therefore you are largely shut out from the real thought and the real life of the people. Whereas to me, she is in very truth the Holy Land—whose great philosophy has been the source of all

philosophies of the Western world, whose great religion has been the origin of all religions, the mother of spirituality, the cradle of civilization. I would win your thoughts to India unfallen, India as she was in her past, as she shall be in her future—mother once more in days to come as in the days behind us, of Art and of Knowledge, mother of spiritual life and of true religion. Such was her vision of India at whose altar she came to worship and to serve; and what magnificent and consecrated service it was! Of this, the late Sri. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has well-observed “I suppose these great specimens of humanity that descend occasionally on this earth of ours march from hill-top to hill-top, striding on from one peak of achievement to another. If they named any three or four of the other great people of India, the sum of their achievements, the aggregate of the benefits that they had rendered to this country would not exceed what stood unquestionably to her credit.” The total output of printed works that stand to the credit of Dr. Besant is reckoned round about 550. Of these, nearly the whole of about 440 publications brought out after her first landing in India in 1893 relate or refer directly or indirectly to the civilization and cultural heritage of India. It is very difficult to make a selection. Nevertheless, mention may be made of the following : The Ancient Wisdom ; Four Great Religions ; The Wisdom of the Upanishads ; A Study In Consciousness ; Translation and Hints on the Study of the Bhagavatgita ; Wake Up India ; Sree Ramachandra—The Ideal King ; The



Story of the Great War (Mahabharata); India A Nation; Children of the Motherland and Kamala Lectures on Indian Ideals in Education, Philosophy, Religion and Art." Stupendous as were her contributions through the written word, her achievements through the spoken word seemed, in a sense, to have made even more lasting contributions in reviving the memory of the reality and richness of our many-sided cultural heritage. Of this the children of the motherland had almost forgotten and had even gone to the extent of making pitiful apologies when that great heritage was spoken of contemptuously by our Western masters and understanding critics. That was the time when de-nationalization and de-spiritualization were in evidence everywhere: and young Indians, suffering distressingly from their load of inferiority complex, had begun to ape Western manners of living, modes of dress and trends of thought. Dr. Besant's first work was to set about changing all this and restore the national self-respect and spiritual basis of our cultural heritage. A vivid portrayal of her work in this direction is found in the description of her first lecturing tour in India by Col. Olcott who accompanied her throughout this tour. He wrote "it is the record of one of the most remarkable lecturing tours in History. Of 121 public addresses to at least an aggregate of 100,000 people; of the winning of the hearts of several nations; and of the awakening of popular enthusiasm for the ancient faiths of Hinduism and Buddhism among their much dejected adherents. Everywhere there were the same crowds hanging upon her eloquent lips, the same rain of tears when she pathetically described the fallen state of the old religions, the same wild applause when she sat down, almost exhausted, after her fervid perorations; of morning conversations when

for two hours or even three sometimes, at a stretch, Annie Besant would answer off-hand the most difficult and abstruse questions in Science, Philosophy, Symbolism and Metaphysics; of grand orations daily to over-packed and sweltering audiences which found no halls big enough to hold them. Over all, through all, and lingering with me like the strain of a sweet symphony dying in the distance is the recollection of the most splendid series of discourses I ever listened to in my life". There is also the striking tribute in the same strain paid by the late Sir P. S. Sivaswami Iyer, when he wrote: "Her wonderful mastery of language, her sweet silvery voice, with its infinite modulation and range, capable of reaching the farthest limits of the audience, as well when it dropped to a whisper as when it rose to an impassioned swell, her frame vibrating with emotion, and her eyes beaming with spirituality and earnestness, thrilled and enthralled her hushed audiences. A desire for knowledge of our own religion and culture was awakened and therewith a sense of National self-respect". It has also to be noted that it was not only in the cause of Hinduism where her work was undoubtedly vast and varied, but also in the cause of other faiths of this land—Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism, Buddhism, Christianity, Sikhism—that she used her marvellous powers of pen and speech, striving to move her readers and hearers to a warm appreciation and a passionate love for their own ancestral faiths and a noble zeal to live and work for the lofty ideals. In each case, she took her readers and listeners through the exoteric teachings and traditions to the very heart and soul of the faith concerned in a way that was a marvel to the learned of each faith and won their grateful admiration and esteem. As she expounded the old philosophies of

India, she poured forth a wealth of knowledge which amazed learned and cultured Hindus". (C. Jinarajadasa).

To restore our national self-respect and reverence for our cultural heritage and to instil faith of confidence in us for advancing that heritage to greater heights was one of the very first tasks to which Dr. Besant specially devoted herself in the early years of her work in India; for she considered that to be basic and fundamental to national regeneration and advancement in every field. Many are the tributes paid to her great success in this task. After this achievement, came her work for National Education with the founding of the Central Hindu College at Benares in 1897 (which ultimately flowered into the Benares Hindu University) and of many other institutions which were numbered by hundreds during the height of her campaign for Home Rule in India. "Dr. Besant realised quite early in her Indian career, that if the religious revival for which she was working was to bear lasting fruit, it must be given concrete embodiment in educational institutions, which would combine the ancient Ashrama ideals of education with the best assimilable ideals of the West, and whose motto would be "*Vidya Dharmena Sobhate*" (Religion embellishes Education). So she now turned to the educational field; and in 1897 founded the Central Hindu College. In a few years the new type of education which the Central Hindu College had established, mainly under Dr. Besant's inspiration, achieved distinction, turning out, as it did, scholars by the hundred, sturdy in build, Aryan in character, keen of intellect, independent in outlook and invincible in championing their own faith. So said Sri Hirendra Nath Dutta.

The key-note of Dr. Besant's activities in the many fields she worked was the ever-recurring theme that, in India spirituality must form the basic and vitalizing principle governing life's activities of every kind. "Every person" she observed, "every race, every nation has its own particular key-note which it brings to the general chord of life and of humanity. India struck the note of spiritual greatness. And it is the perpetual affirmation of spirituality as the highest good that is India's mission to the world. Dr. Besant's manifold activities in the fields of Religion, Philosophy, Education, Social Reform, Art, Politics, and many others were looked upon by her as so many spiritual enterprises—so many spiritual means to achieve that spiritual end and that highest good which formed the one common and supreme objective of them all. Her many contributions to our cultural life in all these fields were so rich in content and so vast in extent that Dr. C. R. Reddi may well explain as she did "Religion, Philosophy, Education, Socialism, Social Reform; infusing new life and light into dead bones and decadent spirit of this ancient land and filling it with self-respect and self-assertion; a spiritual and moral and political leader of the highest and vastest range; how can we measure the worth of her who enveloped the world with a new grace and raised it to a new altitude". Her magnificent contributions to the advancement of our cultural heritage in all the fields already mentioned are well-known, except perhaps in the field of Art and Artistic revival to which she attached the greatest importance. It may therefore be just as well to close this talk with the following extract on "Art" taken from her Kamala Lectures: "Art" she observed "is an attempt to bring down within the vision of ordinary mortals



some of the divine Beauty of which the Artist catches glimpses; he strives to translate these into colours, sounds, forms, words, by creating pictures, melodies, sculptures, poems and other literature, reproducing in others, through his special art, the pleasurable emotion aroused in himself by his glimpses of supernal Beauty sensed by the Ego. Art, as I have often times said, must be no longer a luxury for the rich, but the daily bread of the poor. This is part of India's Dharma. For Beauty diversified into Arts is the true refiner and uplifter of *Humanity*. It is the instrument of culture, the broadener of the heart, the purifying Fire which burns up all prejudices, all pettiness, all coarseness. Without it true Democracy is impossible, equality of social intercourse an empty dream.

Art is the international language, in which mind can speak to mind, heart to heart, even where lips are dumb. Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music, these need no translations, they speak the universal Mother-tongue. Centuries do not age them. Custom does not stale them. Boundaries do not exist for them. Their message is for every country, every tongue. Art will permeate the whole atmosphere of the New Civilization, which is on the threshold. Religion and Art have ever been twin-angels. Let us follow them as they point to the East, where the fair Dawn Maidens are tinting our earth-born clouds with their rose-tipped fingers to welcome the Rising Sun of India, as He leaps across the horizon, and floods our world with the glory of His Unveiled Face."



From Mural Paintings in Travancore

# THE ARTISAN CLASS IN SOUTH INDIA

“ *Viswakarma* ”

**T**he class of artisans known in the Tamil language as *Kammalars*, in the Telugu as *Kamsalas*, and in Sanskrit as *Panchalas*, are the descendants of a race of Aryans who entered India by crossing the Punjab long before Vyasa began the collection and arrangement of the Vedas, which period has been fixed by European oriental scholars as about the fifteenth century B.C. This tribe of Aryans was known in early times under the designations *Visva Brahmins*, *Deva Brahmins* and *Deva Kammalars*, in contradistinction to the modern Brahmins, who are the descendants of Vasishta, and who were known as Go-Brahmins, on account of their custom of receiving cows as gifts. After entering India, this tribe of *Deva Kammalars* travelled gradually downwards to the south of India, from whence many families are said to have emigrated to other parts of the world. During this period they built many of the famous temples which are still in existence in India; they are also supposed at that time to have occupied the position of spiritual guides and preceptors to the people, as may be understood from the common parlance current in South India that *Kammala is Jagat Guru*.

The present families of *Kammalars*, or artisans, are, as I have said, descendants of this ancient tribe *Deva Kammalars*, and following the example of the modern Brahmins, they also ascribe to their forefathers a mythic origin from the face of *Visva Karma*, who is considered by Hindus as the great Architect of the universe. But the most rational conclusion that one can arrive at from various sayings current amongst these people is that

the progenitor of their tribe had five sons. The first-born, named *Manu*, was taught to work in iron; the second, named *Maya*, to work in wood; the third, *Twashtra*, in brass, copper and other alloys; the fourth, *Silpi*, to work in stone; and the fifth and last, named *Visvajna*, in gold and silver, and to set precious stones in jewels. From this, and from the fact that amongst the *Kammalars* of the present day the hereditary follower of the black-smith's trade is socially allowed to take the precedence amongst the artisan class, it may be inferred that the ancient Hindus attached more importance to iron, as a useful metal, than to gold and silver, which they considered as merely ornamental.

Though these five orders of hereditary artisans from the chief portion of the mass employed in the various handicrafts, viz., black-smith's work, carpentry, metal work, stone work and jewellery, there are also men of other castes who, having been in the service of *Kammalars*, have learned their trade, and have set up business on their own account. These in some places have been wrongly included amongst the purely *Kammalar* class, and thus the social status of the original artisan has to a certain extent, been lowered. However, in vindication of their right to higher social position the “*Kammalars* have always maintained an animated fight for precedence in Hindu society.” (*Vide Manual of the Administration of the Madras Presidency*, Vol. I, Chap. 1, page 67.)

As regards religion, the majority of the artisans are Saivites, or worshippers of Siva; the others are either Lingayats or Vaishnavites,



They go through the ceremony of *Upa-nayanam* for the investiture of the *Sacred Thread*. Their marriage ceremony is performed as amongst the Brahmins. Their dead are buried in an erect posture, cremation being resorted to by a very small portion of the community. No instance of the re-

marriage of a widow has yet taken place, and in this respect the *Kammalars* seem to be more strict than Brahmins, amongst whom in recent years there have been instances of widow marriages. The *Kammalars* do not recognise the modern Brahmins as their priests; those they have are of their own class.



# THE SONG OF CULTURE

S. Sanjiva Dev

Venerable Dr. Annie Besant was the veritable embodiment of culture. Her entire life was a moving symbol of culture. To her, culture had been the fulfilment of life and the harmony of thought, feeling and action. Her spiritual *sadhana* had been but the subtlest aspect of her consummate culture.

Culture is the conflagration of the triple-flame of *Satyam*, *Sivam*, *Sundaram*—the Truth, the Good and the Beautiful. Luminous is the flame of *Satyam* or the Truth, warm is the flame of *Sivam* or the good and fragrance is the flame of *Sundaram* or the Beautiful. So intensely luminous, warm and fragrant is the conflagration of Culture that it does consume away the darkness of nescience, the cold of evil and the malodour of ugliness of the entire universe crossing all the mundane horizons of countries, nations and races.

Out of the flame of the True is born the luminous Reason bereft of which all thought is blind, all discrimination gloomy and all rationalism credulous. Out of the flame of the Good rises the warm Unselfishness in absence of which all benevolence turns into malevolence, all altruism into egotism and all faith into dogmatism. Out of the flame of the Beautiful is created the Fragrant feeling devoid of which all creative urge is inexpressive, all sensitivity inert and all art inaesthetic. To keep this triple-flame ablaze in the hearts of the classes and masses alike is to make the human life really living!

Political upliftment is good, economic upliftment is better; but the best of all is the cultural upliftment. Unless there is real culture in a country no political and economic progress could remain permanent. Culture

is the guiding power of all human activity—political, economical, social, educational and religious.

Art is the finest phase of Culture, for it is the most comprehensive medium in approaching the reality: it is the concrete example of the aims and aspirations of a nation. Art is more closely related to life than any other aspect of Culture as art emanates from the heart, the lotus-seat of Life-force.

For the cultural efflorescence of the individual the intellectual alertness is necessary no doubt, but what is needed more is the emotional refinement, the proper cultivation of the faculties of the heart, for Culture is the manifestation of love, charity, mercy, joy etc., the source of which is the heart and heart alone.

Culture is the mountain while civilization is the plains. Culture is the Himalaya from which glide the eternal glaciers of Art, Science and Religion which turn into magnificent rivers vouchsafing life and charm to the otherwise dry and dull plains of civilization. These glaciers of Art, Science and Religion do not stop with assuming the form of mere rivers but ultimately run to the infinite oceans and thus their path finds perfection in the Infinite. These glaciers know well the eternal message of the scriptures “*Nalpe sukhamasti bhumaiva sukham . . . . Yovai bhumam tadamritam athayadalpam tamrityum*”. No happiness is in the finite; Infinite alone is happiness. The Infinite is immortality, the finite is death.

Blessed are they who have really understood the vital conflict between Culture and Civilization and realized blending them into the





*DEVI (Wood Carving)*

*K. Thanikachalam*

one whole. To mistake one for the other means to mistake the body for the soul and *vice versa*. Culture should always guide civilization; in this alone does lie the welfare of the world. Civilization leads the humanity towards the glittering transitory mirages whereas Culture leads it towards the eternal sources of life-giving water!

Glory to the Cult of Culture that leads us from Untruth to Truth, from Darkness to Light and from Mortality to Immortality!

The increase of mere commercial contacts devoid of cordial sympathy between man and man, between woman and woman and between woman and man is one of the dark aspects of the modern times. The outcome of such superficial relations among humanity has been the intensification of jealousy, hatred and greed. Lack of culture and the growth of civilization have been, to a great extent, the main cause of the development of this dark aspect.

No doubt, ours is a scientific age, but what really surprises us is the prevalence of unscientific mode of life among the educated and uneducated alike! Paradoxical it is to find that in this rationalistic age of empiricism it is irrationalism and new superstitions that often come across us.

Beyond everything we must, no doubt, adore science which is the intellectual phase of Culture, but at the same time we must not belittle the glory of Art which is the aesthetic phase of the same Culture. Swelling of the head and thinness of the heart are in no way a happy sign as the result of this would be the free development of the mechanical monotonous civilization.

Unless and until the people can understand the remarkable distinction between what we

call Culture and Civilization no higher aims and aspirations could be fostered among them. This is by no means to preach the message of the gloom of pessimism; this is only the ephemeral shade of the eternal light of optimism. Nobody should revel in the inertia of despair about the prospective glory of creative beauty and knowledge.

When Dr. Nicholas Roerich prophesies about the advent of *Maitreya* he is fully aware that *Maitreya* is not a person that descends upon our terrestrial globe from the Seventh Heaven in order to uplift the fallen and the poor, but *Maitreya* is an energetic influence of whatever is not dark, negative and destructive. *Maitreya* is the concrete aspect of all the abstract aspirations of humanity; *Maitreya* is the realization of the Ideal. So, the sacred signs of *Maitreya* have begun to be visible everywhere through multifarious aspects.

Sweet is the sympathetic mutual understanding among humanity; sweeter is to cherish the idea of mutual help; sweetest is the action of helping mutually. Help is a glorious aspect of Culture. Without mutual help the entire cosmos would cease to exist. All the cosmic forces are interdependent and they do constantly help among themselves. Help is the negation of selfishness; help is the antidote to the pure commercial contacts among humanity; help is the act of both expanding and intensifying one's narrow and dull self. Through mutual understanding, sympathising and helping alone the foundation of the beautiful structure of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity is possible.

By the magnetic touch of Culture the philistine is transformed into a connoisseur, the savage into a savant and the sinner into a saint. The unity of Culture alone can



create a new Federation among the various nations. The plastic thread of Cultural Unity alone is in every way able to unify all the human flowers of varied hues and diverse aromas into an iridescent and fragrant garland of World Federation!

Singing of the glory of the uncertain and unknown future is not an Utopia. The world is just witnessing the indistinct rays of

flickering flames of the future Golden Age—the Age of Culture—when Love, Light and Delight, shall reign everywhere. Let all the aspirants attune themselves to the vibrations of the ever-liberated Spirit of Dr. Annie Besant whose life had been a rare and glorified climax of Culture in its truest sense! Besant was the visible song of Culture!! The Song is still visible!!!



# A MAHA-BHARATA RELIEF FROM CAMBODIA

O. C. Gangoly

**I**t is doubtful if there is any parallel in any period of the world's history of such a complete transmission of any culture from the land of its birth to distant colonies. The picture that we obtain, through the surviving monuments, of the successful transmission of Indian culture, across the Bay of Bengal to distant overseas regions in Further India and Indonesia is a fascinating panorama which sometimes surpasses the records of the propagation of Indian culture in the Indian continent itself. Not only Hindu manners and customs, religious beliefs and cults, but the entire social system, the elaborate economic and religious polities—in all phases of their applications have been carried and transplanted to the Indian colonies across “the moving seas” (*Chalormmi*), to borrow a picturesque phrase from one of the inscriptions of Rajendra Chola. This is proved by the innumerable temples, and the very large number of inscriptions, many of which are in chaste Sanskrit, which also establish, the popularity of the Indian classical language—in Java, Cambodia and Champa. The magnificent monuments raised in the colonies to honour the worship of the Buddha, Siva, or Vishnu put to shade most of the monuments on Indian soil and help to glorify the various Indian cults—with a magnificence which surpass the efforts made in the land of their origin.

It cannot be claimed that all the natives, and diverse indigenous populations in Cambodia, Champa, and Java were proficient in the Sanskrit language, but the number of surviving inscriptions go to show that many must have learnt this “Language of the Gods” (*Deva-bhasa*) in order to follow the injunctions

recorded by the royal donors for carrying on the religious trusts, and charities and the religious services in the temples, for which liberal endowments were provided by the grant of land, monies, and valuable paraphernalia for the practice of the religious cults established in the temples. There were, no doubt, large elements of the population in these regions, who were still on a comparatively low level of culture, and mostly illiterate. Yet for their mental and spiritual uplift, various devices were adopted for the purpose of communicating to them—the best fruits of Indian culture. This was secured by a system of education through the visual way—by providing graphic illustrations of the great Indian Epics—the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana and by providing for the recitations of these texts,—in original Sanskrit, as well as in the recensions and translations in the local dialects—so that the best teachings embodied in these national Indian Epics—were easily accessible to the illiterate masses of Cambodia and Java, and made them Indians in all essential elements of culture, and in mental and spiritual outlook. Just as in Java, the greater part of the Ramayana is illustrated in superb series of stone panels executed on the walls of the Shiva Temple at Prambanam (Central Java) on a similar Visual-Education plan,—we have a whole series of stone pictures, on the walls of the ambulatory corridors of Angkor-Wat (Cambodia) running to several miles in length—depicting in grandiloquent style—the most important episodes of the Mahabharata, the Vishnu Purana, and the Ramayana. These edifying panels conveyed in the most graphic and easily accessible way—the best moral

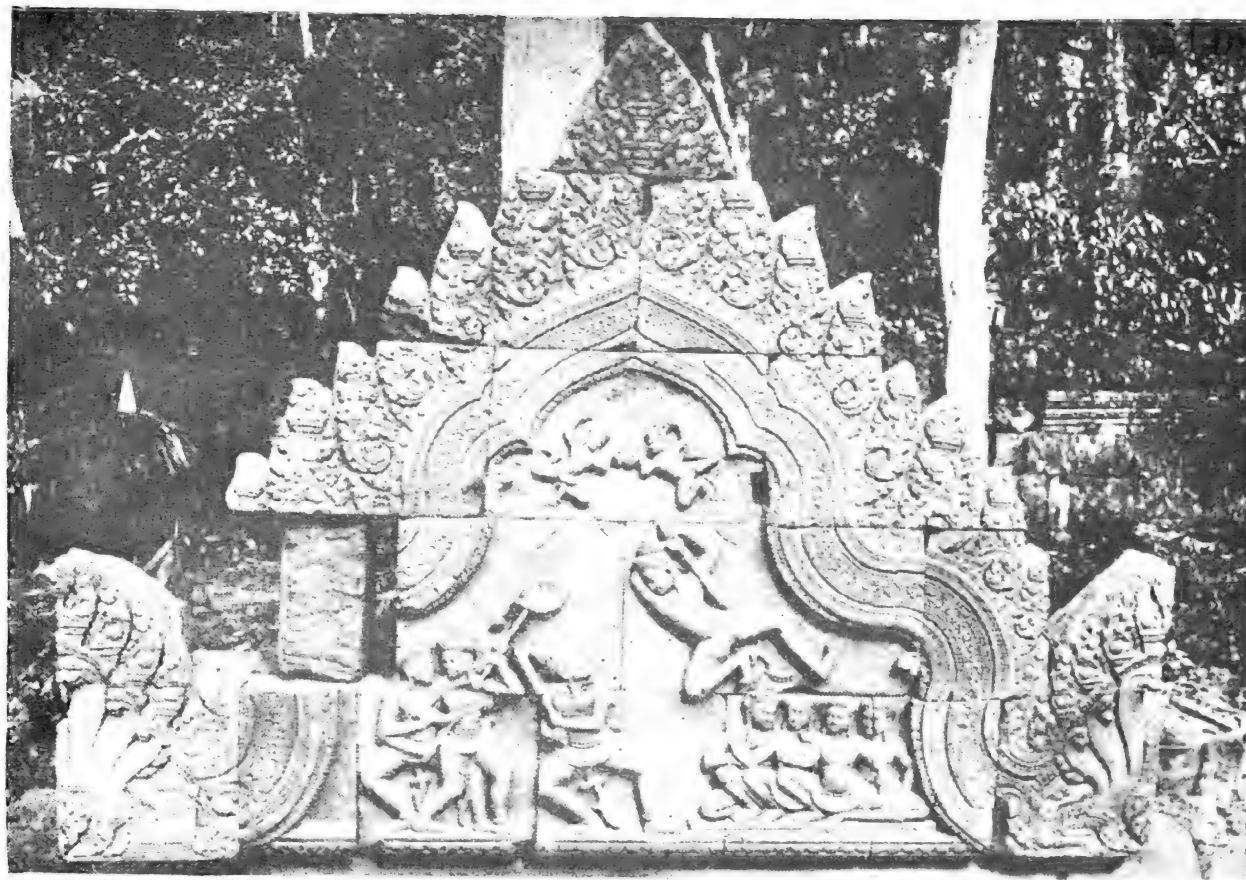


teachings of the Indian epics—to the illiterate masses of Cambodia. These visual presentations—in skilfully executed dramatic compositions on relief-panels—conveyed with equal verb and emphasis—the moving stories in all the grandeur and inspiring contagion—that could be conveyed through the written text. The method was the same as applied to the dissemination of Christian teachings and doctrines by means of sculptural reliefs on the facades of the Gothic Cathedrals of Amiens, Chartres, and other famous churches of France. Some of the Indian colonial monuments in Cambodia and Java—for this form of popular education—date a little earlier than the Gothic Christian monuments of Europe.

As suggested above—the teachings of the great Indian Epics were conveyed both through the literate and illiterate medium. While the illiterates absorbed the stories and teachings of the Epics through the Visual study of the sculptured panels, skilfully placed near the procession-paths (*pradakshina-path*) of the pilgrims, so as to catch their eyes through the attractive “stone-pictures” on the walls, the more educated and the literate classes amongst the populations were given ample opportunity to listen to the texts—through regular and, sometimes, daily recitations of the Epics in the pavilions in the outskirts of the Temples, where devotees gathered to honour the sacred recitals. This is amply borne out by the evidences of many inscriptions in Cambodia. We will cite here two typical examples from numerous lithic records. A fragmentary inscription, much damaged and defaced, comes from Veal Kantel (Province of Tonle Ropon, near the Siamese border) and runs as follows: “There was the daughter of Sri-Vira-Varman, the sister of Sri Bhava-Varman, who devoted to her husband and to the religion was like a

second Arundhati (the wife of Vasistha). He took for his wife this (Lady)—the mother of Hiranya-Varman, the moon among Brahmans, on Akritiswami (i.e., master of Saiva ritualistic system). . . . the foremost of those who are versed in the Sama Veda—he, Sri Somasraman, consecrated (this) Tribhuvanesvara (Lord of the three worlds—Siva), together with (an image of) the Sun, with acts of worship and offerings on a grand scale. With the Ramayana and the Purana he gave the complete Mahabharata and arranged for a daily recitation without interruption. As long as the glory of Tribhuvanesvara survives, whoever participates in this reading may a portion of the fruit of this great and virtuous deed go to the credit of every doer of such a pious act.” The inscription cited above is datable about the early part of the seventh century A.D. (Saka 577). There is another document of the same epoch from Prasat Prah That—being one of the inscriptions relating to the foundation of a *lingam*, and bearing very nearly the same date—viz. the Chatturdasi day in the month of Magha in the Sakha year of 577. We cite here, the actual text of the inscription which runs as follows: “*Dvi-samudrasaraih Sake dine Maghe Chhatur-ddase . . . . Sthitaye dattam Sambhava-pustakam bhava-jnanena nihitam Vyasa-Sastra-nivandhanam / Yo nas-yati durvuddhih niraye sa chiram vaset / Santanam eva vamsam-ca Yah Vyasa-sastra vinasa-krit / Yavat Suryyas ca Chandras ca sa vaset narakesu vai / /*”.

Following the Indian practice,—the donor of this sacred text in order to ensure the perpetuation of the trust utters, in the inscription, an imprecation against any foolish and wicked persons and his family, who should take into their head to destroy this text for



*A Tympanum From Bantay Srie Cambodia*

sacred recital—referred to under the alternative names of “Sambhava-pustakam” and “Vyasa-sastram”.

But if provisions were made for sacred recitals of this text for the benefit of the educated few, for the edification of the uneducated masses—the stirring stories of the Mahabharata were visualized in marvellously carved stone-reliefs—like the “Bible of Amiens”. In addition to the running wall-pictures carved on the passages of *pradakshina*, large separate pictures were carved on the tympanums over the gateways of corridors and of shrines—in which important episodes from the Mahabharata were depicted with marvellous story-telling effects, in the most skilful plastic language. Many of such story-telling tympanums have survived. The most well-known is the beautiful Tympanum of Bantay Srie, illustrating the episode of Tilottama and Sunda and Upa-sunda from

the Adi-Parva (ch. 212, 214) of the Mahabharata. It is our purpose to study in this essay—another fine relief illustrating a very well-known episode of the Epic.

This piece (now carried to a Museum in Paris)—is the Front Tympanum on a gateway of the West Gopuram (Second Enclosure) of the Temple of Bantai-Srei—which belongs to the two periods of two different kings—Jayavarman V (968-1001) and Sri Indra-Varman (1295-1307 A.D.). The form of the Tympanum is in the typical style of the classical periods of Cambodian architecture, being outlined by a heavy moulding of conventional ornament—terminating in the two heads of many-headed snakes—of remarkable vigour and decorative effect. These decorative toranas—are a later development of *makara-toranas* met with in Chola and Chalukyan Architecture in India, the Makara being replaced by the Snake—the Royal



Mythical Emblem of the Cambodian Kings,—recalling their descent from a mythical Nagini ancestress. Inside an elaborately decorated frame designed—in three rhythmically patterned curves,—we have the illustration of a Bharata episode.

It is the well-known dramatic story of the combat of Bhima and Duryodana, (the Urukshanga scene) described with much circumstantial details in the vivid narratives covering several chapters of the *Salya-Parva*, sometimes also designated as the *Gada-Parva*.

“In chapter 52 of the Parva—we have a vivid description of the assembly of people who gathered to witness this Homeric combat, and then there is a long wordy duel between Bhima and Duryodhana—each trying to impress on the other the superior prowess possessed by him. Having said this,

that powerful Hero,—a Tiger among kings—descended for the duel—flourishing his mace—like unto Indra challenging Vritra in battle”<sup>(1)</sup>.

“Then followed fierce and hair-raising duels between the two, each claiming to defeat the other, like Indra threatening Prahlada”<sup>(2)</sup>.

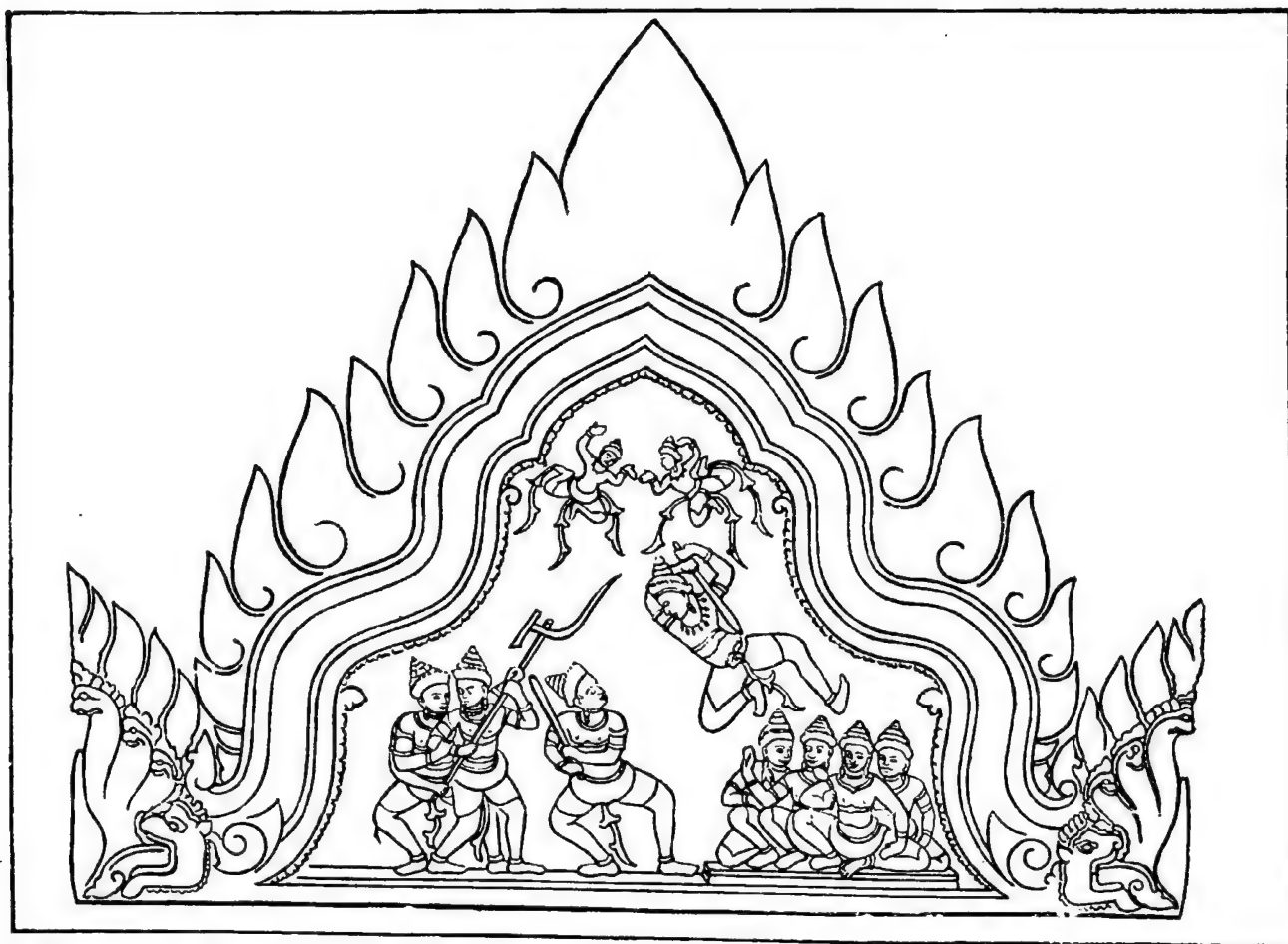
“The Gods, Demo-Gods, and human beings were all struck with amazement at the sight of these two heroes, each flourishing his club, and appearing to possess equal prowess”<sup>(3)</sup>.

“Although the combat was taking place on the face of the earth—on the mundane

(1) “Itiyukta raja-sarddulah gada-madaya viryavan/  
Avatisthata yuddhaya Sakro Vritramivahvayan” //.  
Ch. 52, 29.

(2) “Abhavacca tayor-yuddham tumulam lomaharsanam /  
Jagisato r-yudhanyonya-mindra Prahladayoriva” /.

(3) “Samana-Viryyou Sampreksya pra-grhita gadayudhou ;  
Vismayam paramam jagmur-deva-gandharva-manah” (Salya Parva Ch. 53, 9).



A Tympanum From Bantay Srie Cambodia

plane—its reactions were also heard on the higher regions of the sky. And as the narrator addresses Dhrta-rastra, he reports: “O! Bull among the Bharatas!—one heard terrible ejaculations in the sky—raised by the Yaksas, Raksasas, and the Pisacas.”<sup>(4)</sup>

This activity in the upper regions of the air is some-what symbolically rendered by the artist by the representations of two demi-gods gesticulating in sympathetic movement answering to the duel taking place below.

Among the spectators—there was a dramatic episode—when Balarama, identified by his Plough (hala), more in sympathy with the Kauravas than the Pandavas,—lost his temper as he fancied, Bhima was trying to hit Duryodhana below the belt, and he stretched out his invincible Plough to punish Bhima for his dishonest blows, showering on Bhima—repeated words of “shame! shame!”.

When Balarama lost his temper and was about to take sides and participate in the fight,—he was gently dissuaded by Lord Krishna—as beautifully described in a couple of verses in the original text:—

“And when Balarama rose up to attack Bhimasena, the powerful Krishna, bowing in the first instance in all humility, held his brother firmly by means of his heavy and rounded arms <sup>(5)</sup>.

(4) “Yaksanam raksasanamca pisacanam tathivaca /  
Antarikse mahannadlah srutyate Bharatarsabhah” // .  
(Ibid Ch. 54, 52.

(5) “Tasya tattad vrutanasya rosah samabhavanmahan /  
Tata langulamudyanya Bhimam a-mabhyadravad  
Vali // 7 //  
Tamutpatantam jagraha Kesabo vinayavatah /  
Vahubhyam pina-vrttabhyam prayatnat valavat  
Vali // 9 //  
Sita-sitau yaduvarau susubhate' dhikamtada /  
Nabhagatau yatha Rajan' Candia-Suryyau dina-  
ksaye” / 10 //.

“O! King just as at the time of twilight—the sun and the moon attain intense beauty against the background of the sky—even so—the two great scions of the Yadu race—one of white complexion, and the other of a dark hue, began to shine in great effulgence.”

A lot of the beauty of the verbal picture in the text has been translated on stone by the consummate skill of the master carver of this relief. That the artist has closely studied his text is also evident—in the heroic jumps of the two fighting figures—leaping into the air—far above the ground. This is suggested by several passages in the text (*vtpatan sa punah punah*) and by the description of the use of the manoeuvre known as *Kuasika*.<sup>(6)</sup>

The poet, the composer of the narrative had at his disposal—an extensive “canvas”—consisting of several chapters of written verses (chapters, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, and 56 of the *Salya Parva*) to describe the epic contest, the graphic artist was allotted a tiny space of a few square feet of an arch—performing an architectural function,—to depict his prescribed theme—with the help of a very limited number of dramatic personages. The two combatants, Krishna and Balarama, a couple of demi-gods and the group of four Pandavas—in the corner, are all the figures that could be used to compose the stone-picture. Indeed, the artist has deliberately omitted a lot of elements suggested in the text—and he succeeds in conveying the spirit of the fierce duel—by leaving a lot of vacant space—against which the few moving figures—are skilfully posed to make up a picture full

(6) *Avudhyad Bhimasenastad rajnasya cikirsitam /  
Athasya samabhidrutya samut kru sya ca simha-  
vat* / 45 //

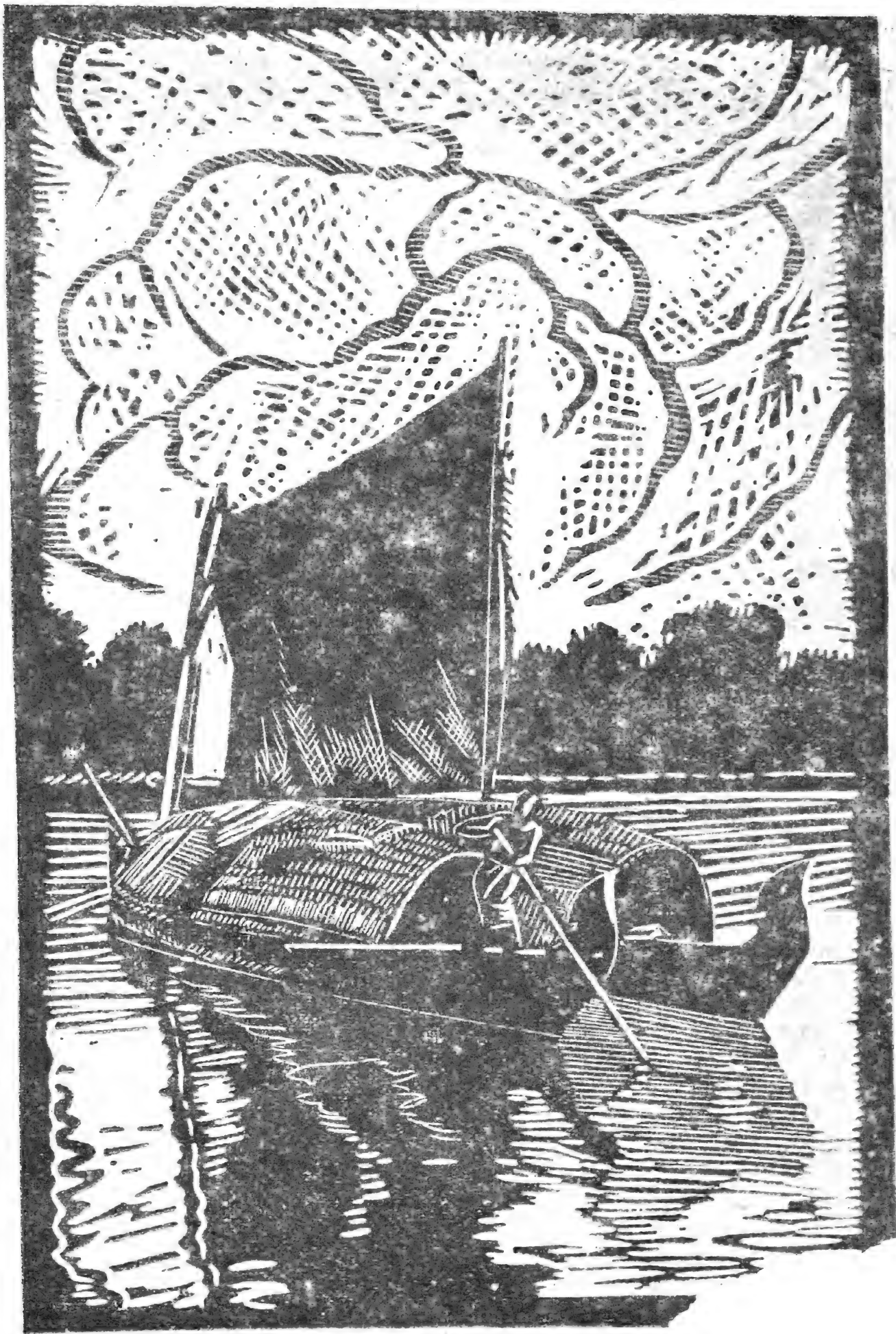
*Mrtum vancayato Rajan! punarevot-patisyatah /  
Urubhyam prahmod Rajan! gadam vegena Pandavah*  
/ 46 //



of force and vitality,—and full of grandeur and dignity. A very happy contrast is afforded—to the three groups of moving pairs, two on the top, two at the corner, and the two main pairs between them—by the seated motionless group at the other corner. The rythmic beauty of the piece is achieved by a happy balancing of action and inaction,

of motion and repose. The piece is undoubtedly one of the finest masterpieces of narrative reliefs—from Cambodia—put to very happy architectural uses. It is very difficult to cite parallels in the Indian continent to challenge the design and the beauty of the composition, illustrating an intensely dramatic episode from the Mahabharata.





BOAT MEN



# INDIAN ART IN LIFE AND RELIGION

Asit K. Haldar

To understand the art-value of a country, it is essential to know the evolution of its historical and specially its religious life. The earliest Indian culture of Mohenjo-Daro and Harappa goes back to about 5000 B.C. It developed gradually through centuries of cultural contact with other Asiatic nations, viz., Sumerian and perhaps early Aryan and Mongolian. Along with it we shall also have to study the cultural history of Asia and the general trend of her religious and philosophical background as a whole.

In India philosophy and religion developed an ideal for the creative mind and the fundamental dualism of *Purusha* and *Prakirti* brought about an experimental and emotional approach in both religion and art. The religious enquiry and its philosophy began spontaneously from the urge of a child to know about the natural phenomenon of the Universe. It was in the *Vedic* age that nature-worship revealed the dual aspect of creation. In this way the Indian viewed life and art in a more poetic manner than in other countries. Indian philosophy and religion always remained mystical and poetical. It could also absorb all that came to its contact. The Greek philosophy was couched in prose and the difference in the attitude of thinking could be at once observed. Hindu art is the natural sequence of aesthetic appeal evolved through early pre-historic humanity. It therefore tried to render the emotion evoked in the mind by observing life and phenomenon through art. In this way art developed through observation and thinking. The stability in nature symbolized in different forms and the emotional expression found in

it was deliberately studied by the artists of India. They thus created the dynamic and the rhythmic forms in art which are essentially Indian.

The influence of Indian philosophy and art brought about a change in Asiatic countries and the later Buddhist civilisation had a great influence over them. Along with the Buddhist religion the early Chinese pilgrims took back with them the art of India to the Far East. The Universities of *Nalanda*, *Taxila*, and *Sarnath* and also many other Buddhist monasteries and temples became the centres of learning. Art, philosophy and literature developed and spread from them throughout the Asiatic continent. The artist of China, Japan, Java, Bali, Siam, Cambodia, Sumatra and Korea developed the same dynamic and rhythmic sense from the art and religion of India and we still observe the great stamp of India's influence in them. In Barabodour sculptures in Java, and in old Balinese temple-architecture and sculptures, in Ankor Vat temples of Cambodia and paintings of Honan in China, evidence of such Indian influence can be traced. Wave after wave of direct influence of Indian culture of the Hindu-Buddhist periods can be perceived even in Khotan, Miran, Tarfan and in the Chinese Turkestan. The Persian paintings of the early Islamic school were also influenced by them. We thus see in these paintings evidence of the energetic drawing of Chinese Turkestan.

Buddhist philosophy did not discover anything beyond what Gautama-Buddha, its originator learnt from the pre-Buddhist Brahmanic religion, i.e., *Vedas and Vedantas*.

He re-discovered the ways to approach the problem of *Atman*—the eternal soul-force through *renunciation* and *Dhyana*. The abstract ideas of *Vedas* developed in more concrete form under the Buddhist doctrine in India, with the result that art of India developed a peculiar humanistic interest mingled with abstract symbolism in the later *Mahayana* Buddhist faith which cannot be traced in any other country. It is therefore impossible for a foreign critic to understand the view-points of ancient Indian art, unless he studies the spirit of such abstract views of life which prevailed in Hindu-Buddhist philosophy.

Buddhist religion originated from the *Vedantas* and ultimately blended peculiarly with Hinduism in Mahayana Buddhist form of *Tantric* and *Vaishnavite* cults pre-eminently took hold over it. The seers found easy way to educate the masses in religion by introducing myths and legends to expound it in India. *Rama* and *Krishna* incarnations of God were introduced to symbolize the abstract ideas of all powerful God-head. Thus the many-armed Gods and Goddesses in sculptures and paintings representing transcendental truths and feelings, came into existence who gradually wore themselves into the spiritual memory and imagination of the people.

In this way the art of India carried messages of ideas in concrete forms through various symbolism and abstract expressions in sculptures, architecture and painting. The artist had to learn details of such symbolism in order to solve the problems of enlightening his own people who could at once understand them with little effort. Like Buddhist *Triratna* and Hindu *Mangolik*, are of India embodied multifarious symbolic manifestations through abstract shapes and forms. The Chinese missionaries came to India to learn not only

Buddhist philosophy and iconography with all their associative links but also took away all symbolic expressions of art with them to China with all essential qualities. Exceptionally rich and varied art-forms which became emblems of Buddhist religion appeared in Chinese art. In this way the Indo-Aryan civilisation originally based upon *Vedas* influenced the art of China and Indonesian countries.

The cultural expansion of India into Greater India was mainly due to the spiritual fact that India always tried sincerely to get into the spirit of the dynamic and cosmic reality beyond transitional phases of life and that she was never content with its surface value. Artist-philosophers of India have always interpreted the expansion of life through their art which they never understood in terms of materialism.

Before the days of *Shankaracharya* and *Ramanuja* there were no restrictions imposed by caste and creed, and people could travel into distant lands to preach the gospel of Buddha. They went to Ceylon, Indonesia and Afghanistan and other places as a matter of fact wherever they wished to, and left their mark in the shape of architecture, sculpture and painting. It will be wrong to consider that the cultural contact was one way journey. India also gained immensely. There are many things of art in our country which came from outside. We were never weak as to discard anything good only because it was foreign. We were young, bold, vigorous and expanding. Thus we see Chandra Gupta, I could erect a replica of the Persian architecture in his capital Pataliputra. It was a magnificent palace. Similarly in the Moghul days Sarasenian art came to India and developed Indo-Sarasenic architecture of



great merit without hampering the intricacies of Indian art. The down-fall of Buddhism did not, however hamper the progress of art in India as the Moghul Emperors too kept up its great tradition and we know that the famous Hindu court-painter Bishan Das, was especially commissioned by Shah Abbas I, in Iran to paint his likeness. The Indo-Sarassenic Moghul architecture ultimately produced Taj Mahal the greatest architectural monument of the world. It stands for all time as a symbol of Muslim culture blended with Hindu genius. Such examples of cultural assimilation in Moghul days are many in the field of art. In painting, music and architecture Moghul Emperors showed the way how the native genius can be utilised and the spirit of Indian culture maintained as a living object. They never had indifferent archaeological interest for Indian art as shown by the educated people of our time who began to ape foreign manners and rejected the traditional value of Indian art. Moghul Emperors made India their home and did all to embellish it through art according to their imaginative and aesthetic consciousness. Whatever archaeological interest we cherish in our time we take our ideas from quaint curious of the life-less primitive folk-art which lingered in a decadent state in the villages. We do not wish to minimise the value of art-heritage of ancient India when art education was neglected neither by the king nor by the common people. In *Shakuntala*, *Ratnavali*, *Mrichchhakatika* and many medieval Sanskrit Kavyas we find that even the maid servants could draw paintings of great merit. Though such paintings did not survive the ravages of time, the frescoes of the cave-temples of India give ample examples to the standard achieved by the artists in those remote days.

Looking at the matter historically, in the paintings of the primitive people of phylolithic age found all over the world, we get records of their danger-ridden life. In these paintings we see the scenes of hunting wild beasts with whom they had to struggle in their wild life. In the paintings both in East and West we similarly find evidence of a religious spirit moulded in the environment of religious restriction.

Though the artist is not bound by any moral code, the potential significance of art is not only responsible for visual growth of mental perception, but could discover unprecedented quality of abstract construction which nature can hardly afford to impart. The artist could sometimes obtain such visionary expression through colours and forms perceived in nature. Moreover art is the expression of life featured in the rythmic balance created by the artist in bringing out harmonized effect of the object he depicts. Similarly religion is the soul-force required in life for its guidance towards progress. Art and religion co-related in life could bring perfection and remove disharmony amongst the different races of mankind.

The artist in this way, through the constant appreciation and expressions of life's fundamentals, becomes more conscious of the Infinity within the life-force. It revealed to him the phenomenon of life and death—the growth and decay of everything in this Universe. Through his work he can therefore experience the Eternity of undiscovered truth still stretched out before him. Such is the thrilling adventure of an artist in the quest of new forms and expressions.

In Indian art we have got that living spirit which can undergo revolutionary changes

from pure and simple art-form to the symbolic and philosophic expressions. In Indian art artist's mental images become more real and important factor. Indian art has got scope for expansion and some day, we believe, it might lead the world-art if the dynamic spirit which once inspired the art of Asiatic world could be understood in its true light. Superficial admiration for primitive folk art encouraged by the *dilettante* scholar-critics of our time will not help beyond creating a pseudo-archaeological interest for it. We hope that a time will come when the art of

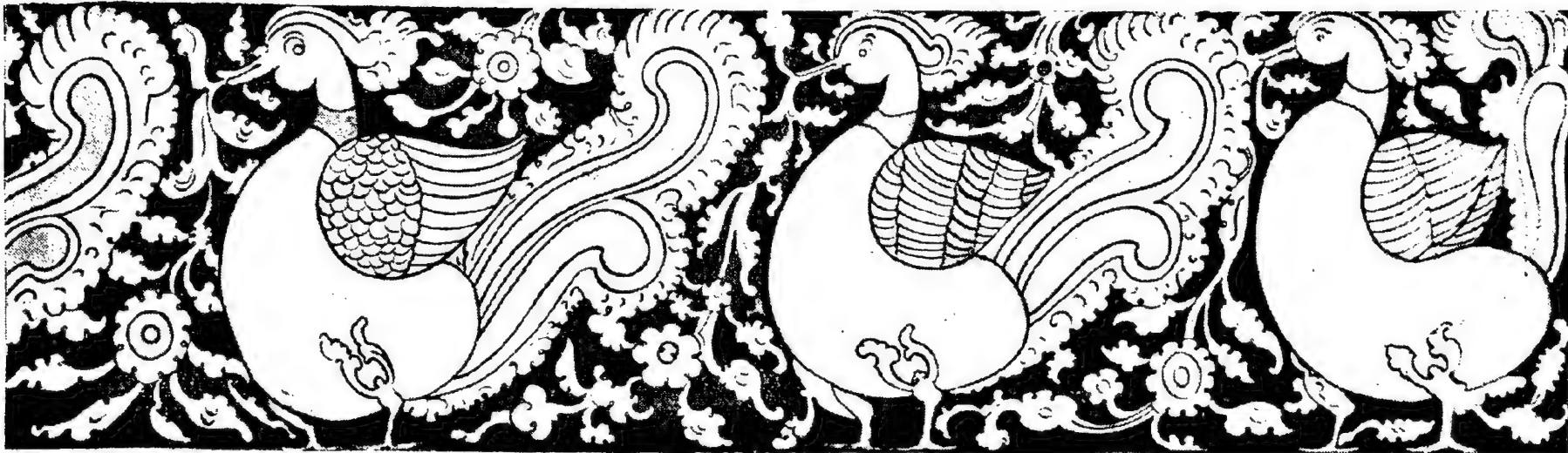
India will be properly understood and the progressive elements in the Hindu-Buddhist and Moghul arts will be re-valued by the artists as the living fountain heads for their spontaneous creative expressions. The potential art of India having remained hidden in the various caves and temples, will once again give *light* to the world. Indian art will then stand out again as a source of inspiration of the art-world.

---

Inaugural lecture delivered by the Author at the Art Section of the Fifth Annual Conference of World Religions, held at Delhi, on the 22nd March, 1947.







## MURAL PAINTINGS IN TRAVANCORE

*K. P. Padmanabhan Tampy. B.A.*

**T**o Travancore goes the unique honour of having been the first Indian State whose progressive Government have founded a permanent Art Gallery which contains a comprehensive collection of the finest examples of Indian Mural Painting, for the enjoyment, education and artistic development of its people. In the *Sri Chitralayam* at Trivandrum, there is an admirably designed display of Buddhist and Hindu Mural Painting. Excellent and true copies of the famous frescoes from Ajanta, Bagh and Sittanavasal, Travancore and Cochin, Ceylon and Persia, are exhibited in this Art Gallery in chronological sequence thereby linking up the art of Kerala with that of Central and North India.

Dr. Cousins, the first European connoisseur of Art to make a study of the Travancore Mural Paintings, observes thus: "In the pictorial art of Kerala there are traces of Buddhist Painting that link the art of Kerala with that of Ajanta and Bagh. There is a remarkable power in these murals. Their technique and finish are excellent. Their atmosphere is always one of sanctity, they are eloquent with spiritual instruction. . . . The

secret of attractiveness of the murals lies in the vitality of their figures and in the variety of postures and gestures throbbing with exalted life." He adds that the Paintings show "a distinctiveness, compounded of skill in composition within a given space, of designed detail of strength of line and of colour-schemes that satisfy the requirements of both symbolism and artistic effectiveness."

The *Padmanabhapuram Palace* and the *Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple* in Travancore contain the originals of the majority of the Travancore mural Paintings exhibited in the *Sri Chitralayam*. Those who visit these Sanctuaries of Art are moved by the sheer beauty of the Frescoes which with the exquisite wood-carving form the most precious artistic heritage of Travancore. Asit Kumar Haldar, one of the foremost Artists of India has, in his scholarly and illuminating book "Art and Tradition", expressed himself thus: "Mural painting adorns its sister art architecture and it can be judged by its design and in its structural unity with its architectural environments. To understand Indian fresco it must be seen in the space which it occupies."



Sastha on Horse Back

Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple

The genius of the masters who executed the Travancore mural paintings may be discerned in many a line and curve and in the wonderful delicacy of the well-toned vegetable colours used for painting on walls. These frescoes express fantasy, aspiration, and vision in eloquent lines and delicate colours. These epic and lyric qualities are first rate. They are distinguished by forms that are poems and colours that are melodies and they are throughout saturated with holy feelings, and noblest aspirations. In these frescoes Hindu Art holds itself to the essential dignity of the human soul without denying sensuous appeal and impresses upon the art connoisseur that the master minds who conceived and executed these marvellous works of art were not ordinary mortals, but Titans of energy and creative genius. These wall paintings of old are full of the animation

of life, and they convey much more than the art of paint and pencil. They captivate our minds, give joy to our eyes and provide us with that concentrated essence of artistic expression which makes it significant not only to the mind but to the inner spirit as well. There is in these wall paintings a "timeless delight" which is akin to the bliss of *Brahman*.

The Travancore Mural Paintings exhibited in the State Art Gallery compel attention. They reveal the highly developed state of Mural Painting embellishing the temples and palaces of Travancore and Cochin. These artistic achievements of our ancestors set before us a wonderful example of the creative power of man and his lofty sense of sublime beauty and aesthetic grandeur. The centuries-old frescoes are wonderfully fresh and unmutated. The various phases of the active religious imagination and coloured ceremonial life of India, find their powerful and charming expression in these Mural Paintings. The figures in the frescoes are done with great care and are of the greatest artistic excellence alike in conception and composition. The expression on their faces is dignified and make you feel that you are face to face with a sublime power. The poses are natural, graceful and vigorous. Deeply devotional and intensely humanistic, these Mural Paintings display "the most beautiful union of painting with poetical mythology and genuine theory of music."

The line-work of the master artists who painted the Travancore Frescoes bears comparison with that of the Masters of the Italian School of Painting of the Renaissance period. These frescoes illustrate a precise knowledge of the technique of line and colour, and recall to mind the finest specimens of mural art





*Nataraja Mural*

*Sri Ethamanoor Temple*

executed by the 9th century Byzantine School of Artists. The artists who produced the Travancore murals have discarded all superfluities of colour and shade and by masterly strokes of marvellous flexibility have expressed in vivid colours what language itself can only imperfectly express. The male figures in the Travancore Frescoes are all heroic; the maidens are all lovely. The lovely maidens in sweet attractive poses irradiate charm and bespeak purity and moral exaltation. The most sweeping and eloquent gestures are made use of by the talented artists to express physical and spiritual charms. These mural

paintings possess a powerful rhythm which sets the heart strings vibrating. They date from the ninth to the eighteenth century. Their technique and finish are superb and they are profound in spiritual instruction. The personalities in these wall paintings of old throb with exalted life. The most wonderful state of efflorescence of Travancore art and culture is witnessed in these masterpieces of inspired art which impart to us vivid impressions of an ancient culture. They display a vigorous style and are rooted in truth. They evoke fear and veneration. With arresting faithfulness and dominant



Ganapathi

Thirunandikkara Mural

realism which powerfully moves the spectator, human emotions, grave and gay, have been exquisitely portrayed in these noble frescoes which are remarkable for their excellent grouping, cosmic symbolism, impressive continuity, perfection of technique and composition. They exhibit a joyous and sumptuous exuberance of human fancy running riot. All that is noble in human faith and warm in human feeling has been recorded in these wall paintings which are the glory of Hindu art. These frescoes indicate the loftiest of creative strivings, the communion with the Infinite, and the entry into the realm of spiritual bliss. They portray spiritual powers which control human destiny. In these works of Hindu art the soul and the senses are addressed in one evocative harmony. No lover of art and aesthetics can afford to miss an examination of these frescoes.

Both as the highest form of artistic conception and technique, and as historic ethnogra-

phical records, the Travancore mural paintings are of enormous value. The great and distinctive art displayed in these paintings reveal a wonderful vitality and intensity of feeling, meditative charm, divine majesty, decorative delicacy, unique verisimilitude, subtle charm of colour, fine texture and marvellous draughtsmanship. The rich, glowing beauty of the splendid colouring of the Travancore Frescoes is at once an object of wonder and envy to the modern artist. Works of unusual charm and beauty of colour have been executed by the painters of these murals, with red, blue, yellow and green paints and many intermediate tones. The talent for composition and intuitive power of expression displayed by the artists exhort eloquent appreciation. The mural paintings indicate an intensive love of life, joyous vision, inspiring youthfulness and sublime beauty. For detailed finesse and rhythmic poise they are supreme. They recall to mind the vigorous and overcrowded canvasses of the Venetian Masters of the Renaissance. These paintings form a stupendous art gallery unique in the history of Indian art produced by master artists of vision and intuition who were not inferior to those who painted the splendid frescoes in the Ajanta and Bagh caves and the tombs of the ancient Kings of Egypt and Italian Frescoes.

All the Travancore Frescoes are Hindu in subject. Those who produced these superb wall pictures were unknown craftsmen who cared not for fame. They inherited the traditions of their art from generation to generation. His Highness the Maharaja of Travancore, in his speech on the occasion of the opening of the Sri Chitralayam, said: "A word of tribute is due to the master craftsmen of the past whose names are unknown, because in their profound love for their work they failed to sign their names

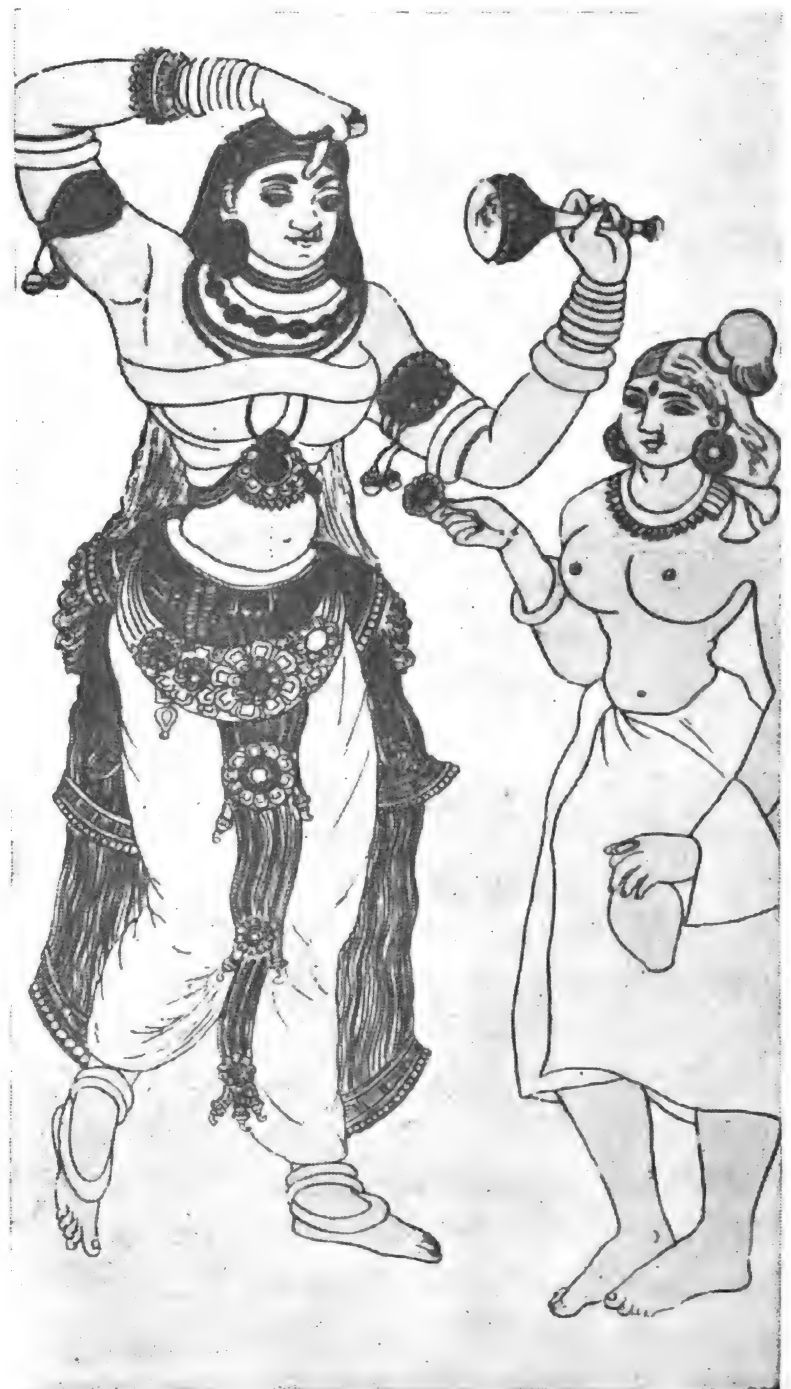
even on a panel. They laboured patiently and devoutly in order to bequeath to posterity remarkable specimens of mural paintings which evoke our admiration and reverence. The wealth of intrinsic value inherent in Kerala art as revealed in the exquisite murals can never fail to satisfy the tastes of each successive age and to supply it with virile incentives."

Most of the Travancore Frescoes continue to remain wonderfully fresh despite their age. Some of them indicate a harmonious union of Hindu conceptions and ideals with Buddhistic influence, both in demeanour and craft. The paintings are distinguished by boldness of outline and broad sweep of the brush. The wonderful spontaneous brush line, (a characteristic feature of early mediaeval mural paintings in Europe) of the Kerala Frescoes is indicative of artistic perfection. These wall paintings are remarkable for their powerful rhythmic lines, rich warm tones, decorative design, dynamic quality and emotional depth.

*Ganapathi and Siva and Parvathi with Devotees*, the originals of which are in the famous cave temple of Thirunandikkara, are the earliest relics of mural painting so far discovered in South India. The style of these splendid frescoes, ascribed to the early ninth century, is similar to the Ajanta paintings. Faithful copies of these age-old frescoes in the Thirunandikkara cave temple have been made by Sarkis Katchadourian, the eminent Iranian artist who is "an enthusiastic, and experienced student, restorer and copyist of ancient oriental art". According to him perfection is the only word that can be used to describe their quality. The colouring is clear and the harmony of the colours is admirably suited to each subject and shows its superb

quality of workmanship. This supreme work was done by the great artists of Travancore of the ninth century A.D." The discovery of these ancient frescoes which suggest a remarkable affinity with the art of Ajanta, is epoch making, and is one of the major achievements of the present era of enlightenment in Travancore which has added an invaluable chapter to the history and quality of Indian painting.

*Naturaja*.—(The Lord of the Dance), is the most striking of the Travancore murals.



A Lady's Toilet Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple





*Rajarajeswari Sri Padmanabhaswami Temple*

This painting which belongs to the 16th century embellishes the Gopuram of the famous Ettumanur shrine. It is the symbolical expression of continuous motion. This mural is a master piece of Indian art and a powerful and awe-inspiring representation of the *Tandava* dance of Lord Siva. E. B. Havell says : “One of the most inspired conceptions of Hindu art is that of Siva as the Universal Lord, or the Soul of the Universe manifesting itself in matter, in his mystic dance of creation, symbolising the perfect joy which God feels in the creation which he makes, controls, destroys and renews at will. Siva performed this dance in the presence of all the devas, to the accompaniment of the celestial drum which, like Vishnu’s Conch-shell trumpet, is the symbol of vibration, the creative force”. This dance is depicted in the Nataraja mural. Dr. Anandacoomaraswamy the eminent art critic, regards this fresco as the “oldest specimen of Dravidian Painting”. Sir William Rothenstein has characterised the symbolical ritual expression of Nataraja as one of the three supreme expressions in art that India has given to the world. The powerful symphony of the rich and graceful movement of the Dancer produces a sublime effect upon

The painting which is circular in shape has been so cunningly executed that the eye fails to grasp at first sight the marvels of exquisite workmanship. It intoxicates the sense of the spectator and plunges him into spiritual exaltation. The complexity of detail in this painting does not take away from the compelling dominance of the main figure in the design. Only a great thinker possessed of soaring imagination and overwhelming piety could have conceived and executed this marvellous work of art which is surcharged with a wealth of mystic glamour and beauty. Nataraja is the second largest frescoe that has as yet been discovered in Travancore (the first being the largest frescoe (14' × 11')—“Gajendra Moksham” which may be considered as the latest example of mural painting in Travancore, is remarkable for its dazzling colours, magnificent composition, harmony of form and design, flowing lines of exquisite beauty, and its delicacy and refinement.

The *Mural Harihara* which measures 4' × 1½' is a typical masterpiece of South Indian Art. It is symbolical of form and life and represents the inner unity of the two paramount features of the Hindu Supreme Being : of God Maha Vishnu (Hari) and God Siva (Hara). The painting at first sight appears to be composed of a single figure, *Hari* on the left and *Hara* on the right. Magnificent grasp of composition and living texture are displayed in the frescoe. The same concept of Inner Unity is expressed in the mural painting depicting Siva and Parvathi, in the Single figure known as *Ardhanareeswara* (*Ardha* means half, *nari* goddess, and *Eswara* God). The original of these exquisite frescoes adorn the bed room of one of the former ruler of the State in the Padmanabhapuram Palace. A compendium

of history, domesticity and art, this palace contains finest examples *in situ* of the major arts of architecture, sculpture, wood-carving and mural-painting.

*Krishna and Gopies* (4' 2" × 3' 8") and *Sri Rama* are two of the finest mural paintings in the Padmanabhapuram palace. They are excellent in technique and finish and eloquent with spiritual intuition and uplifting sentiments. The figures in these frescoes are full of vitality and grace and they throb with exalted life. The sumptuousness of floral design and the depiction of fish in the mural *Krishna and Gopies* indicate the skill of the master artists in painting nature. The colours in these stuccoes are rich, resplendent and lovely and the figures are dignified in posture and demeanour. A vast drama moves before our eyes on seeing these mural paintings which are remarkable for their expressive and pleasing lines. 41 mural paintings covering an area of 915 square feet, adorn the Mural Pagoda in the Padmanabhapuram Palace which is hailed as the Ajanta of Travancore.

The craftsmanship discerned in the Travancore frescoes is superb. Their symbolic expression is arresting. There is a wealth of beauty, majesty and charm in them that makes us stand lost in admiration of a culture of the highest standing. The artists who created these miracles of inspired art had an eye for feature and form and full mastery of technique to faithfully yet imaginatively represent it. In these paintings which are exquisite and full of powerful rhythm more is meant for the head and the heart than for the eye. Niceties of perspective and anatomic perfection did not bother the creative artists who executed these murals. the mind of the devotee and the spectator.

These still pictures behind which there is classical tradition of personality and event depict thrilling puranic stories in a manner which is more interesting, instructive and spectacular than a modern movie. The Padmanabhapuram murals are assigned to the 16th century. In their vividness of conception and assurance of execution they are supreme.

The mural paintings of *Rajarajeswari*, *Manmatha*, (God of Love), *God Sastha on Horseback*, *Narada the Rishi*, *God Subramania* and *A Lady's Toilet*, are some of the best in the collection of frescoes exhibited in the Sri Chitralayam. The original paintings adorn the walls of the Sree Padmanabhaswami Temple. These are remarkable for their superb pose, meditative repose, radiant expression and lavish embellishment. They are unsurpassed in linear presentation, emotional fervour, consummate charm and contemplative mysticism. Their dignified beauty of form and refinement are graceful. What is most noteworthy among them is the vividness of their decoration, the soft colours reconciling the various parts of the composition and the bright colours of the garments, drapery etc., suggesting a richness and profusion of ornamentation. They tattoo themselves on memory's surface. Some of the figures of maidens resemble *Apsaras*, the divine damsels. The frescoes have been executed in fast vegetable colours the richness of which has not been dimmed by time. The essentials of exquisite feminine charm as indicated in the ancient books have been observed in the sprightly figures with brows like the crescent moon, almond shaped eyes, bosoms well shaped, rounded hips, slender waists, and elongated fingers. The elusive grace of women is most charmingly depicted in these frescoes. "Majesty and Power"

distinguish the women in the Travancore frescoes. The portraiture of women in these frescoes is exquisite, matchless and full of dignity. The poses are acclaimed as the acme of art. To see these murals which are at once spiritualised and spiritualising is to see poetry in motion and perceive a new world. "They are a flowering of the mind in form". The artists who painted these frescoes were gifted with vivid visual imagination and talent for original design. The rich and subtle intricacies of symbolical embellishment and decoration expressed in a lavish display of adornments and implements are carried out with amazing assurance and balance.

The sensitive and mobile curves of the hands and fingers in the various graceful poses which are typical of the Ajanta style, speak to us, hold our mind, and stir our thoughts. The lines are drawn with utmost firmness and delicacy and they are full of languid grace. The Travancore frescoes prove that "the line, the most primitive invention in the art-world, unconsciously gives us food for aesthetic culture, and as such will ever remain a method of expression of all artists."

The Travancore mural paintings are accomplished in execution, vivacious and varied in design, full of form and colour, and marvellous in perspective and grouping. They possess both power and strength. They seem to move and speak. The unity of style evident in these paintings in stucco, is marvellous. The long and subtle curves are drawn with

supreme precision showing consummate skill and manual dexterity. The paintings are soft and subtle and their calligraphic and sweeping curves remind one of the finest achievements of Chinese and Japanese art. The artists who drew these frescoes possessed perfect command of posture. The Hindu racial type has been glorified in these works of inspired art. These frescoes indicate a harmonious union of art, poetry and music. The portraits of Gods and Goddesses witnessed in these murals have been executed by master craftsmen strictly in accordance with the description of deities as given in the *Agamas* and *Tantras*. The artists who produced these frescoes were no doubt great devotees and profound scholars. Mural art in Travancore is plastic and sculptural, both in respect of its characteristic technique of colouring and the extreme sensitiveness of its lines. There is no mannerism and monotony in these frescoes which convey moods, sentiments and passion. The imaginative forces of creative art are visible in these wall paintings which are remarkable for their cohesion and unity.

Thanks to the unremitting care bestowed by the Travancore Archaeological Department, these exquisite mural paintings are in an excellent state of preservation. A word of praise is due to the Art Adviser to the Government of Travancore, and the present Director of Archaeology for the great work they have done in discovering and classifying the frescoes and focussing the attention of the art world on these precious relics of the remote art-history of Travancore.

---



# THE GWALIOR SCHOOL OF MUSIC

*Susheela Misra*

**I**n the history of Hindustani classical music, Gwalior stands out as prominently as, if not more than Delhi, Lucknow, Rampur, Jaipur and Deccan-Hyderabad. The traditions of this music are inextricably associated with Gwalior.

Our sources of information about the modes of Indian music prior to the Muslim period are scanty and so our notions on them are rather hazy. The *Bharatha Natya Sastra Brihatdasi*, and *Sangeetaratnakara* are the earliest treatises we have. It was during the Muslim period that Hindustani music blossomed out—thanks to unforgettable names like Amir Khuzru, who not only invented and introduced new ragas, talas and instruments, but effectively blended Persian touches into Indian music. “Art being a living organism, is bound to expand” and music being pre-eminently an Art, is of an extremely changing nature. Musical fashions, like all other fashions, have always undergone change after change and have been moulded and remoulded to suit changed tastes and trends through every era. In this process, Hindustani music, as it is to-day, stands inseparably associated with and deeply indebted to Gwalior.

*Dhrupads.*—The inception of music all over the world has been from Religion. In to-day’s classical music, the “Dhrupad” occupies the most exalted place, and this originated from the old “Temple-music”. It has, therefore, had a long and checkered history. Its themes are sometimes devotional, sometimes didactic, sometimes descriptive (of the beauties of creation), sometimes heroic (recital of heroic actions): they may also

pertain to Puranic stories or Divine Romances. But having originated from the ancient *Prabandhas* (in Sanskrit and other provincial languages) and being sung in temples, these old Dhrupadas afforded absolutely no scope for the display of musical skill. To *Raja Man of Gwalior* goes the credit for making them part of classical music and thus popularising them. Rajah Man is remembered to this day as one of the greatest patrons, scholars, and lovers of music we ever had. Memorials of his patronage of music are still visible in Gwalior. Once, he summoned a great conference of artists and musicians, and the essence of the valuable discussions held there has been compiled by him into a book *Mankutuhel*. It throws valuable light on the condition of music in the early Muhammadan period and is still available for reference in certain state libraries. The Dhrupad style of singing was a great contribution of the Gwalior school to Hindustani *ragdari* (Classical) music. This brings us to the eve of the brightest period in the history of Hindustani music—the era of Tansen and his illustrious descendants.

*Tansen.*—In the history of Indian Music, who has not heard the immortal name of Tansen? He was justly idolised in his time, and to-day we worship him almost as a saint. He was the greatest of all *Dhrupadiyas* (a Katavant) and was a product of the Gwalior school of music. Originally he was a Gaud Brahmin and his name was *Tanna Misra* (son of Makarand Pande). He became the disciple of *Swami Haridas Dagur* of Brindaban. Still later, he came under the influence of a great Muslim musician Mohammad Ghaus of Gwalior under whose guidance, Tansen

achieved unprecedented fame. His fame spread so far and wide that Emperor Akbar personally fetched him to his Court and kept him in the highest esteem. Tansen and his descendants were strict Dhrupadiyas and have been the leaders of and authorities on Hindustani classical music.

Nyamatkhan and Naubatkhan who later on adorned the court of Mohmad Shah of Delhi were Tansen's descendants and naturally Dhrupadiyas. But Dhrupad-singing, as it existed then, was bound down by strict and scientific rules which left very little scope for the singer to show his originality and individuality. Moreover, the particular type of voice necessary for Dhrupad-singing was (and is) very difficult to cultivate. Hence these two evolved an entirely new mode and started composing what are known as Khayals.

*Khayals.*—These were patterned roughly like the Dhrupads but in such a way as to afford plenty of scope for alap-singing, etc., along with the composition. They evolved also a new type of alap-singing suited to these compositions. Such is the origin of to-day's Khayal. Nyamat and Naubad assumed the pseudonyms *Adarang* and *Sadarang* while composing these Khayals, and it is by these pseudonyms, rather than by their real names that they are known today. In many khayals, they have mentioned the name of their patron Mohammed Shah. They composed hundreds of khayals and taught them to their disciples. These khayals have come down to us, and to-day not a day goes without our hearing their immortal names in some khayal or other. Of the three kinds of khayals, the slow (vilambit) khayals were modelled after the Dhrupads, whereas the medium (Madhyalaya)

and fast (drut) ones were couched in the Qawwal Vani.

The originator of Qaurvalis was *Amir Khusru*, the versatile poet-cum-musician-cum-statesman. As Islam forbade music strictly, these Qaurvalis (Mussalmani Bhajans) had been composed for purely devotional recitations. Gradually, however, there arose a class of professionals who earned their livelihood by Qaurvali-singing. These singers—known as “Qaurvals”—began to make free use of “tans” and “paltes” in the course of Qaurval-singing. Out of these “Qaurvals”, *Adarang*, *Sadarang* and *Manarang* composed their beautiful madhyalaya and drut khayals.

Bye and bye, however, these khayals became so popular as to oust the Dhrupads slowly. To day one notes with immense regret that Dhrupad-singing is almost becoming extinct. The day the Dhrupads regain their old popularity will be an auspicious day for our Music. For, training in Dhrupad-singing alone can make the voice at once steady, strong, full-throated and sweet. Lately, however, quite a few seem to have been attracted by the sublime words and meanings of Dhrupads. This is a healthy and hopeful augury.

*Tansen and His Descendants—Gwalior Court Musicians.*—The best khayal-singers have been Tansen and his pupils. The names of *Bade Muhammad Khan*; *Haddu*, *Hassu*, *Nathu*, *Wazirkhan*, *Tanaraskhan*, *Mahmud Ali*, *Ali Bux*, *Miyajan*, etc., are unforgettable. Of these, *Haddu*, *Hassu* and *Bade Muhammad Khan* were court-musicians of Gwalior. The last was the son of *Shakkar Khan* and considered peerless in the matter of tan-singing. He was employed as court-musician (with a four-digit salary) by *Daulat Rau Scindia*. He sang khayals

in the Qaurvali style, i.e., with various delicacies and dexterity. In the same durbar were Kadir Bux's 3 sons, Haddu, Hassu and Nathu who won precocious mastery in music at very early ages. They were Khayalists of the elaborate Katavant style. Later on, they evolved a beautiful and exquisite combination of the *Kalavant* and *Qaurvali* styles of Khayal-singing. It is interesting to note that this unique combination too should have been evolved in Tansen's birth place! Is it then, any wonder that Khayal-singers have looked upon Gwalior as a sort of *sacred-spot*? It was the birth place of the Dhrupad and the Khayal as well of all the eminent Dhrupadiyas and Khayalists. Nearly all the reputed musicians of Akbar's court were from Gwalior. It gave us Tansen.

*Maharashtrian Musicians at Gwalior.*—The popularization of classical music in Maharashtra began through Gwalior. The Maharashtrian Brahmin-singers of Gwalior were greatly benefited by the current Gwalior school of music. Many of the pupils of Hassu and Haddu were Maharashtrian Brahmins among whom were eminent singers like Babasaheb Dixit, Vasudeva Rau Joshi, and Balasaheb Guruji. Their disciples have preserved classical traditions to a great extent. We also owe a lot to the Maharashtrian disciples of Nissar Hussain (Dixit of Hassu-Haddu family). The late reputed musician *Shanker Rao Pandit* was a favourite pupil of his. Music lovers still recall Shanker Pandit's name with great love and respect. His son Krishna Rao Shanker Pandit is to-day a court musician of Gwalior, and is running a Music-school in his father's name—"Shankar Gandharv Vidyalaya".

*Raja Bhaiyya Poonchwale.*—The Principal of the "*Madho Sanget Mahavidyalaya*" is

another reputed disciple of Shanker Pandit. He had the privilege of learning a large number of Dhrupads from the great Dhrupadiya, Wamanbuva Deshpande; and later on, Khayals from Shanker Pandit. What was more, since the opening of the music school, he was for a long time able to avail himself of Pandit Bhatkhandiji's valuable association and guidance. Thanks to which to-day Raja Phaiya is regarded as a skilled singer and a learned scholar in the art of music.

*Chaturpandit Bhatkhandeji.*—The Madho-sangeet Mahavidyalaya is the triumphant fruit of Guruvarya Bhatkhandiji's selfless endeavours and a proof of Madhav Rao Maharaja's lofty musical tastes and patronage of music. This and similar schools of music have contributed in no small measure to the revival of interest in classical music which had cooled down to a deplorable level.

Among the long array of Maharashtrian musicians who went to Gwalior and achieved commendable mastery over the Gwalior-style of ragdari sangeet, comes the name of Balkrishnabuva Khalkaranjekar—a pupil of Vasudevrau Joshi (Hassu's pupil). After undergoing a prolonged training he returned to his native town and devoted the rest of his life rekindling musical tastes among his people. The most eminent of his pupils of-course was *Vishnu Digambar Paluskar* whose name is familiar to all. We all know how ceaselessly he strove to popularise music by establishing music schools at various places. But his training and efforts were not comprehensive. The limitation may have been due to the queer circumstances of those days when musicians selfishly concealed their art. Anyway Digambar did revive interest in one aspect of our music—namely, the devotional



aspect of it (Bhajans) and for this we shall be always grateful to him.

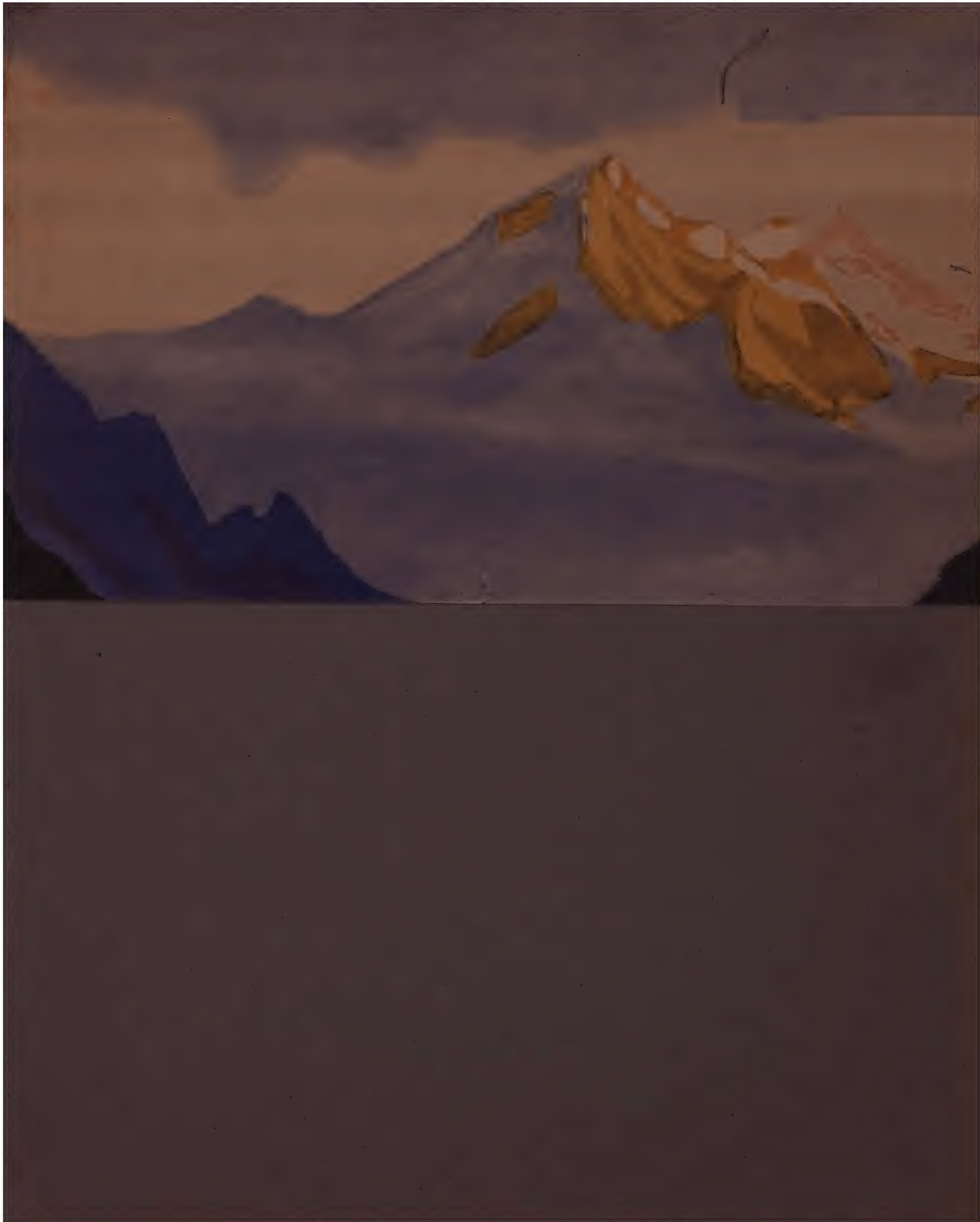
Balakrishnabuva's son Annabuva was a good musician but he died prematurely. The former's disciples Anantbuva Joshi of Oundh and Mirasbuva of Poona are two of our contemporaries. They have tried to preserve the musical traditions of their school. Another pupil is Gundubuva whose son is still the court musician of Ichalkaranji.

Classical music penetrated into Maharashtra from Gwalior, but since its penetration there, it has undergone numerous changes, under various influences. For instance, good musicians of Agra, Delhi, Jaunpur, etc., migrated into the big cities of India (Bombay, Calcutta and Madras), when they ceased to get royal patronage; and in these big cities, they were forced to earn their livelihood by giving music performances. The names of Tanaraskhan, Haiderkhan, Nathu Khan, Mahmud Khan, Muyajan, etc., are familiar in this connection. Those have influenced music in Maharashtra to a great extent. Though the original Gwalior-style is rarely to be heard in its pristine purity to-day, the traditions have been prescribed to some extent luckily.

*Characteristics of the Gwalior style.*—Some of the requisites of good Khayal-singing are :—a clear-cut presentation of “Asthayi” and “Anthara” (the 2 portions of the songs) with proper pauses, a skilfully slow pace and proper combinations of swaras (notes) and Sahitya (words). Those who have luckily had training in the Gwalior-style of Khayal-singing are very particular about the neat presentation of the asthayi and antara at the very outset. Inability to do this is rightly considered disgraceful by them, and so they

pay special attention to the neat presentation of the song with correct pronunciation of the words. “*Alap*” at the outset is usually done in “akar” (without words) but consistent with the tempo of the song. After finishing slow alaps, the speed is slowly increased, and what is known as *Bol-alaps* (words of the song deftly presented in various combinations of notes) are started. Cleverly the *Bol-tans* (words woven into quick combinations of notes) and plain tans are introduced. When the tempo and pace have been somewhat quickened, the skilled musician harmoniously passes on to a quicker song (drut) or a fast “tarana” in the same raga. In the fast khayal also, the parts of the song are legibly presented at first, after which the singer begins his extempore elaborations, rapid tans and various other beautiful intricacies and delicate embellishments which afford plenty of scope for the display of personal skill, originality and industry. The tans of the Gwalior school are justly famous and admired. The tans are straight, clear, full-throated and varied. Effective little “running passages of notes” are interwoven into the khayals. On the whole, there is something extremely dignified and impressive about the Gwalior-style of classical music.

*Musical Gwalior—That was.*—There had been a time when Gwalior used to be so intensely music-mad that “the very leaves would not tremble but to the sounds of music”. Music-festivals used to be part of the daily-routine in the durbars. The Princes and the people were alike absorbed in the ecstatic enjoyment and appreciation of music day and night. Even half-clad street-urchins would try to hum tans! “Will that idyllic state of affairs ever come back to be!” one wonders. . . .



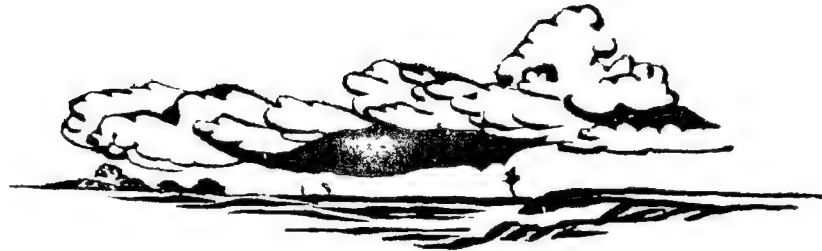
Bye and bye the zeal for khayal-singing and for classical music began to flag and ebb to a very low level, because good musicians (like Hussain Khan, Rahmat Khan, and other Brahmin singers) began to become thorough stay-at-homes, teaching only those who went to them in their seclusion. Under such circumstances, one cannot guess what would have become of the Gwalior-style of classical music had not Pandit Bhatkhandeji dedicated his life to the revival of classical music and succeeded in opening the classical music colleges at Gwalior and Lucknow! (whose branches are sprouting up in various other cities now, e.g., Bombay, Calcutta, etc.).

In this connection, the omission of Principal Ratanjankar's eminent name would leave this survey incomplete. As we all

know, he is a great master in the science as well as art of Hindustani Music. Most well-known among the disciples of Pandit Bhatkhande, he has assimilated the essentials of the Gwalior-style and mastered the entire, collection of songs laboriously gathered by the Chaturpandit from the exponents of various schools. Principal Ratanjankar's music combines sweetness with dignity. In the Bhatkhande College of Music of Lucknow (founded by Bhatkhandeji, and continued under Sri Ratanjankar's principalship), the Vice-Principal as well as some of the other notable members of the staff are products of the Gwalior School.

---

This article has been adapted into English *with commendations* from Principal Ratanjankar's Marathi article "Gwalior ki Gaeki" published in the Vikram Smriti Granth some years ago.





# NICHOLAS ROERICH

R. S. Fontes



From a Painting by Svetoslav Roerich

Nicholas Roerich was born in Petersburg on 10th October 1874, and from his childhood he evinced a desire to become a great artist. A disciple of Kudrin and Mikeshin, he soon proved to be a worthy disciple of the great masters. "The Messenger" painted by him when he was only 23 (in 1897) was acquired by the famous Tretyakov Gallery of Moscow and won the diploma of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts.

Since then Roerich's career has been astounding as a painter, poet, philosopher and humanitarian.

In 1913 with Stravinsky, he was the creator of the immortal *Le Sacre du Printemps* considered by many art critics to be one of the most outstanding artistic events of the 20th century. And indeed it was, and neither the later works of Picasso and Derain

(*Le Balad Russe* of Diaghilev, 1917) nor any other works succeeded in creating the halo of admiration that was gained for *Le Sacre* which compelled Prof. Cormon to say at that time to Roerich: "We shall have much to learn from you."

The world has indeed learned much from Roerich's work. More than any other painter of all these centuries, he has given us a clear interpretation of the spiritual world, the value of Art in transmuting the baser experiences of men into symbols of thought perfection and spiritual treasures. This spiritual vision is manifest in all his paintings, frescoes and portraits, and the cosmic synthesis they reveal, convince us that Nicholas Roerich has created a "realm" of Art all his own.

Nicholas Roerich belongs to no school, yet I can safely say that the Master belongs to

all schools in the sense that his work is permeated with the grandeur of all great works of art, and, in spite of this, his art as Tagore said is "independent because it is great. Every painting by Roerich is deeply imbued with the soul of the cosmos beckoning us to regions far above the material world.

It is this spiritual quality that will certainly make Roerich's work outlive many generations, nay it will last as long as men on this world have a faint notion of aesthetic values and a dim vision of spiritual realities. It is this spiritual significance of the work of Roerich that makes him the Painter of All Times.

And Roerich is not only the painter who creates a world of beauties and art values, but also he is the philosopher, the artist, with a mission to save mankind through art and culture. He is the spiritual leader of all great artists. In Tibet, in India, in America and in Europe his name is revered as that of a Sage and a Guru. From his Himalayan abode he still sheds the light of his knowledge and art on all of us to whom the name of the Master is the key to spiritual salvation and the attainment of higher values. And from Naggar (British India), where he stays now, comes to me and the world at large the following warning: "Beware of the Armageddon of Culture!" Yes, in the world of to-day, with a life of hatred and misunderstanding it is our sacred duty to preserve art and culture.

Nicholas Roerich—the painter of all times, yes, Roerich, whose imagination is equal to that of Turner or Blake, and whose works rank foremost amongst humanity's art creations, will ever remain as the supreme teacher of Art and Spiritual truths.

In Riga, Moscow, Leningrad, Bruges, Prague, Paris, Rome, New York, Canberra and in many museums in India, the paintings of Nicholas Roerich remind us that behind this veil of life is the supreme reality that we, sometimes, in the turmoil and strife of life, forget to acknowledge and revere.

"You shall know that in that country where Knowledge and Beauty will be revered, there will be peace," says Roerich.

The magic of Roerich's art, its mystical flavour, is such that at the sight of any of his paintings we feel that a great soul and a great artist has combined light and shade in such a way as to awake in us the most sublime feelings, and this explains the outburst of Zuloaga on seeing a painting by Roerich: "What a great Artist!" That is the magic of the "aesthetic rhythm" of Roerich's works, to borrow a phrase from Ivan Narodny.

Nicholas Roerich came to India in 1928 and since then he has toured the country from North to South, staying for a long time in Tibet in the company of the Tibetan Lamas who regard him a superior being in every respect. His paintings adorn most of the Indian Art Galleries and Museums and private collections. In Naggar, Punjab, British India, he has founded the *Uruswati Research Institute* (in 1928) for conducting research work in philology, botany, cancer and history, and it is now under the direction of Roerich's son, Dr. Georges de Roerich.

Roerich's most famous paintings with Indian motives are: *Deva Dasi*, *Lakshmi*, *The Way to India*, *Sri Krishna*, *Command of the Guru* and many others.

To attest to the world the immortality of Roerich's art, a museum called *Roerich*

*Museum* was founded in New York in 1923. It is a magnificent structure, 29 storeyed, housing 1,000 paintings of the 5,000 the Master has produced. Attached to it, is the *Master Institute of Journalism*.

Personally, Roerich is a kind man, methodical and hard-working. Even now he starts his work at seven in the morning and goes to bed late in the night. He always tries to serve his fellow-creatures in the Christian sense. Since my first contact with him I have admired his generosity and his capacity for

work at this old age. And now that the war is over his heart is full of hope for new work and new achievements—not for himself, but for humanity. In a recent letter to me he writes : “The Treasures of Culture are in danger and we have to defend them.”

When I read his essays and his poems, when time and again I look at his paintings and listen to his personal advices, my heart throbs with delight and I say aloud : “Roerich is the Artist of All Times and for All Times.”



*From Mural Paintings in Travancore*



# CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES

*Viswanathan Tekumalla*

**T**he nineties of the last century marked a great crisis for Industrial Crafts in India; for in 1891 the great industrial scientist, P. N. Bose, voiced the opinion of the educated men of the period when he declared in his Presidential Address at the Indian Industrial Conference, held at Calcutta, that "the day of mere manual skill is gone by, and, rest assured, will never return". These crafts owing to their inherent vitality, tided over the crisis, and fifteen years later, in 1906, the same scientist was obliged to admit in his welcome address to the delegates of the Indian Industrial Conference, held in that very city, that "that the possibilities of such (petty) industries should be developed to the fullest extent goes without saying". The forbidding by the Secretary of State in 1910 of State Managed Commercial Enterprises, the banking crisis and the failure of industrial enterprises about 1913 and the Great War of 1914 to 1918 which made it impossible for India to import foreign goods as well as to start large scale industries in the country proved to be blessings in disguise for the indigenous crafts of India, because the country was obliged to depend more and more on the products of craftsmen. The Co-operative Societies Act of 1912, also came in good time and gave facilities to the artisans to improve themselves and their art by co-operative effort. The campaign against foreign imports launched by the Congress in 1921 and 1931 acted as a great stimulus for these small industries, while the self-determination granted by the 1919 Reforms to provinces in the field of co-operation made it possible for the Provin-

ces like Bombay and Madras to enable their small industries to develop on co-operative lines in conformity with local conditions. But by far the greatest opportunity occurred in 1935 when the new Government of India Act enabled the Congress to contest for power. The question of 'Cottage Industries' was brought into limelight during the election campaign and was pursued vigorously by the Congress Ministries till their termination in 1940. And the out-break of the present World War even earlier than the end of the Congress regime, has obliged the Governments to continue without any break the policy of Congress ministers towards cottage industries. Some progress in the development of cottage industries in general and on co-operative lines in particular has been reported from time to time in every province; but the lines of progress appear to indicate a lack of clear ideology: Cottage industries and co-operation are still understood in their narrow obsolete sense which is incompatible with modern conditions. Hence before proceeding to estimate critically the progress of cottage industries on co-operative lines and suggest further and more correct lines of development, I propose to point out the exact connotation and denotation of the two terms under present day conditions.

The term Cottage Industries has been understood and defined by many individuals and committees in a loose and incomplete manner. Importance has been given only to secondary questions like capital and place of work and not to the human aspect—the point of human labour, pure and as related

to the machine. In Capitalistic industry capital is more important; in co-operative industry labour is most important. I suggest here that, by cottage industries, should be understood those industries where artisans not exceeding nine per industrial unit, find employment either as independent workers or apprentices or assistants in or at thier own or their employers' homes, or as wage-earners in small *Kharkhanas*, and work with capital, limited in practice but not in theory, adopting at times a simple but harmless division of labour, and employing such hand-or power-driven machinery as does not interfere with the utility and art values of the products whose market is by no means merely local.

And now of Co-operation: Unfortunately it is often forgotten that Indian Co-operation is different from European Co-operation in the same sense as Indian Economics is different from European Economics; and the Indian system is viewed through European spectacles. That co-operation is a form of organisation for all round progress on an economic basis is true; but in devising the means of achieving it, it must be noted that European co-operation was the outcome of popular effort while Indian Co-operation was the result of Government initiative. It follows that in India, if co-operation should be successful, the Government through its local self-governing bodies must associate itself with the people not merely in a patronising way but in actual co-partnership. Hence co-operation in India should be taken to mean a form of organisation wherein persons associate together under State (Government) auspices on a basis of equality for the promotion of their economic and other interests.

A critical estimate of the progress of cottage industries on co-operative lines to recent

times will facilitate a correct appreciation of the problems that now confront the co-operation-minded industrial enthusiasts: I shall here confine my attention to the Madras Province, since it is easier for us to comprehend our own conditions. The number of co-operative societies for weavers who constitute the largest single artisan group in the country grew from 1 in 1905 to 21 in 1919-20, 52 in 1927, 174 in 1939-40 and 215 in 1942 and 336 in 1946. Almost all these societies deal in mill-yarn products. Khaddar is still run almost on capitalistic lines; for in 1939-40 there were only 5 spinners' societies, 3 weavers' societies and 2 sale societies for Khaddar. The number of co-operative milk supply societies and dairies rose from 12 in 1927 to 121 in 1940-41. The following figures show the number of and the business done by cottage industries societies in 1940-41 in the Madras Province :—\*

	No. of Societies.	Business done. Rs.
Milk Supply Societies .. ..	104	6,44,129
Milk Unions .. ..	17	6,88,650
Weavers' Societies .. ..	194	14,06,000
Madras H. L. Weavers' Society ..	1	25,31,000
Egg Marketing Societies .. ..	3	8,750
Hand pounded rice Societies ..	2	4,045
Cottage Industries Societies exclusively for Women .. ..	21	Little work.
Other cottage Industries Societies ..	63	do.
Fishermen's non-credit Societies ..	34	do.

\* On 30—6—1946 there were 336 weavers' Co-operatives and 222 other Societies: but how for they indiate real progress is still to be seen.

This slow progress of the co-operative movement in relation to cottage industries was pointed out by responsible bodies from time to time. In 1927-28 the Townsend Committee wrote, "the help given by the co-operative movement to weavers so far is negligible: most of the weavers' societies are doing little, if any, work". Over a decade later, in 1939-40, the Madras Committee on Co-operation recorded that "these societies

(weavers') have not met with much success . . . . The societies have had a chequered career. There have been deaths and new births from time to time". And in regard to cottage industries in general, the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, wrote in his administration report for 1938-39: "I must confess that very little has been done so far to form co-operative societies for the promotion of cottage industries".

This slow progress of cottage industries in general and this chequered career, characterised by deaths and births of societies, during a quarter of a century when many opportunities, as mentioned above, occurred for cottage industries to develop themselves, is certainly indicative of some vital defects in their organisation and management, the diagnosis and elimination of which is a *sine qua non* of cottage industrial development in the country. With a view to find out these vital defects which caused either failure or averted crisis of some of the co-operative societies, I toured the Coastal Andhra Districts extensively in 1942 and 1943 and I give below the circumstances which led to the failure or some crisis of some important co-operative societies of representative industries.

1. *Cotton handloom weavers' society of a West Godavari village.*—The secretary was a mere boy who was under the influence of the president. Work was irregularly given to members. Only about 10 looms were employed whereas about 40 looms could be provided with work. The secretary and the president utilised the society's funds and showed some private producers' cloth as stock at the time of audit. This mischief was detected by the authorities; many members withdrew their share capital. Consequently the society had to be wound up.

2. *Cotton handloom weavers' society of a Krishna village.*—The capital was inadequate. Loans and some times even wages could not be given due to non-selling of stock. Moreover the Provincial Co-operative Society gave only 40 per cent of yarn requirements of the society, and even that after much delay and correspondence. At that time the local sowcars used to advance money with a view to attract weavers. The cloth woven was according to the instructions of the Provincial Weavers' Society of Madras but not according to local tastes. The cost of production was higher than that of the local private weavers by at least 20 per cent. Since local merchants cared for cheapness of cloth and not for quality, the superior cloth of the society could not stand competition. This cloth was sent to distant markets in the Province. After some months part of the stock was returned as unsold. Since the unsold stock was in a spoiled condition it had to be sold at 60 per cent of the original price. The finances and membership gradually dwindled and the society was wound up.

3. *Woollen weavers' society of a West Godavari village.*—There were factions among the members. The president of the society was alleged to have borrowed much money from the society through the members under his influence, with a view to meet a Government contract for rugs on his own account. Subsequently the contract was cancelled. He sold away a part of the raw material, but, without crediting it to the society, he started private business with the capital on hand. The society's finances having suffered, the other members protested. The president and his party resented this action and decided to wind up the society, so that they might carry on their business



freely. It was also alleged that a certain Co-operative Inspector was more interested in the Ellore Pile-Carpet Weavers' Society than in the other society and that the spinners of wool of the latter were induced to spin woollen yarn for the carpet weavers' society.

4. *A Co-operative milk supply society of a Krishna town.*—At first the society used to buy all the milk supplied by the members. The same members used to buy milk cheaply outside and sell it privately in the town at competitive rates, thus harming their own society. Consequently the society had to turn the surplus milk into curds. It lost heavily in this curd business since it could not compete with the inferior stuff sold locally. Then again in winter the members could supply milk but in summer could not supply it in adequate quantities. There was a crisis but it was averted by the timely interference of the supervising officials.

5. *A Fishermen's society of a West Godavari village.*—It had not enough capital. It undertook to sell fish at favourable rates. But transactions took at least one week. Meanwhile the members were hard pressed for money. Hence they were obliged to sell away their catches to private merchants at low rates. Thus the society became virtually a non-entity.

6. *Co-operative credit society of a West Godavari village.*—The story of the failure of a credit society cannot be out of place since as the Madras Committee on credit in 1939-40 stated "There were 64 societies in the Province in which more than 60 per cent of the members were weavers".

At first the president took much interest in the society. But when between 1925 and 1932 the Panchayat Board, Panchayat Court

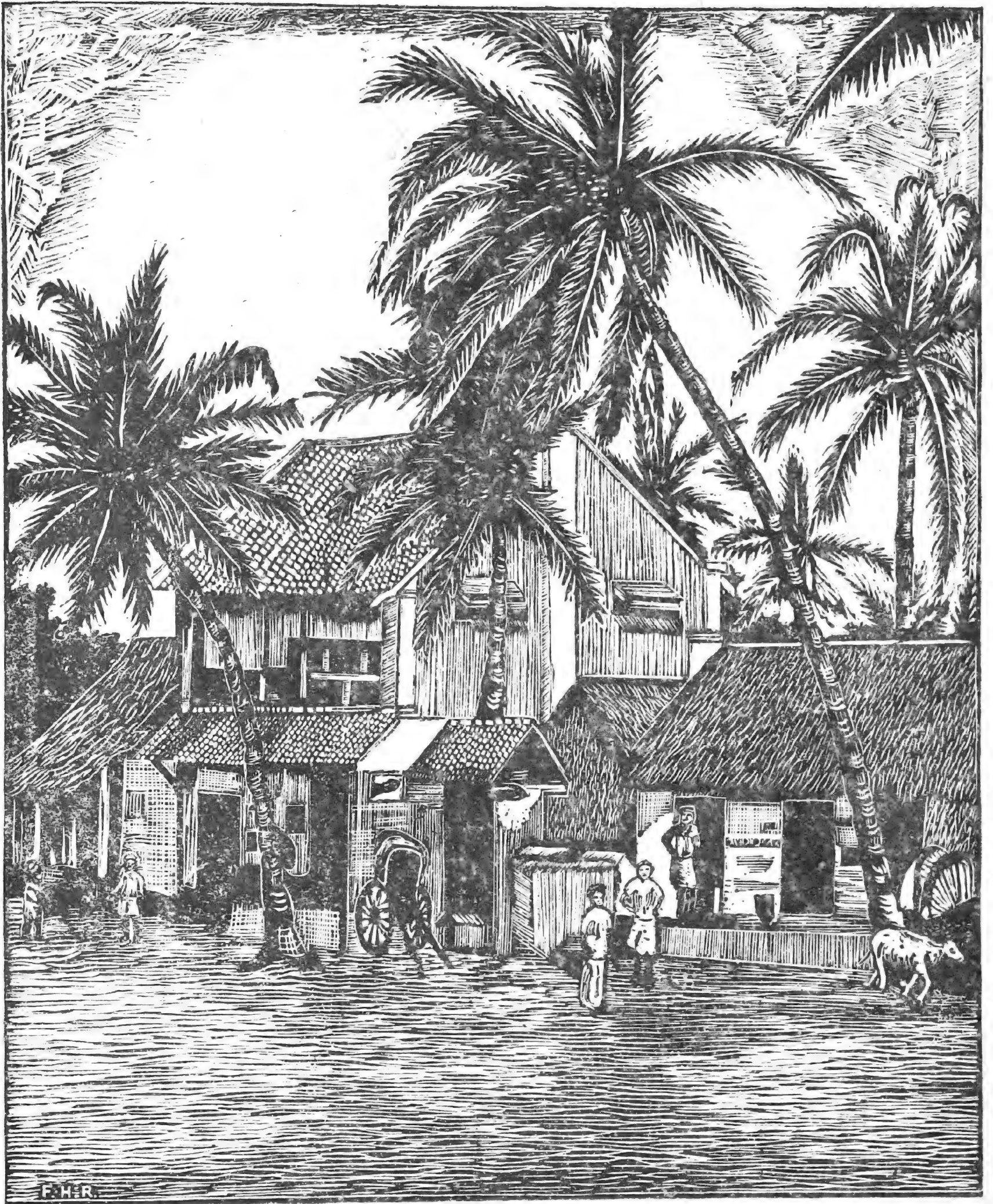
and Forest Panchayat were opened, he began to utilise the society as a source of finance and influence to achieve his own personal ambitions. Any person was enrolled as a member and allowed to borrow indiscreetly from the society. The president and his party were backed by some responsible co-operative officials and no notice was taken of the corruption even when pointed out! Soon bad debts accumulated and the membership dwindled. The society was wound up.

From these brief accounts and relevant details, the following causes of the failure or crisis of co-operative societies of artisans may be inferred :—

(i) *Lack of adequate capital.*—Societies had not enough capital either to give full time work to members or to enable them to manage until the products were sold. Consequently the members were obliged to produce for the local market or for the local sowcar.

(ii) *Lack of good faith among the members.*—The limited benefits conferred by the societies made the members disloyal. Hence some members used to do private business during the brisk season and depend on their respective societies during the slack one. Some members even considered the societies as a third party which aimed at gaining by their labour and so did not scruple to play duplicity by competing in their individual capacity with their own body corporate.

(iii) Some influential members as office bearers utilised the societies' funds to further their own personal ends. In one case attempts were made to run the society as a capitalistic concern for personal economic gain. This



MALABAR VILLAGE

F. H. RAULEDER



led to factions which resulted in the winding up of society.

(iv) The consumers not having been accustomed to care more for quality than for price, the non-member artisans competed keenly with the members of societies by producing inferior stuff for the market. The societies could not cope with the situation.

(v) Instead of obtaining the co-operation of the supervising officials the office-bearers of some societies actually betrayed their own cause by hoodwinking them.

These causes may be said to hold good for the whole Province since as can be seen from the following figures of 1940-41 the average percentage of defective and bad societies of the Coastal Andhra Districts was almost the same for the whole province :—

	Thoroughly good societies.	Defective and bad societies.	All other societies.	Total.
Average per district in the province.	4.0	26	69.3	100
Average per district in the Coastal Andhra.	4.4	29	68.0	100

It will thus be seen that the handicaps of the co-operative movement were two—psychological and material. Time was when, besides the virtual co-operative institutions like the *Nidhis*, the joint family system helped to knit together the members of large families in mutual trust and good faith. Now due to several causes the joint family system yielded place to individualism which brought with it mutual suspicion and ill-will. The co-operative movement which is essentially a nationwide endeavour to combine judiciously, the virtues of the two mutually opposed forces, has been trying to eliminate the undesirable elements in them like suspicion and distrust.

The measure of success achieved so far has not been very appreciable. It was unfortunate that this psychological handicap should synchronise with the Economic Depression, for during the decade following the Depression, several artisans, finding it hard to run their trades independently, chose to take service under some capitalists. The rising prices of raw materials during the early part of the present war were as detrimental to the interests of the artisans as the falling prices of their products during the preceding decade.

Does this unsatisfactory background augur a bright future for cottage industries in our country? It does, for the success so far achieved is not discouraging. Even as long ago as 1920, Hemingway felt that “co-operative societies of all kinds are found to be admirably receptive of new ideas for the improvement in the appliances and methods of their members’ occupations whether agricultural or industrial”. The Townsend Committee opined likewise : and the Madras Committee of 1939-40 “are satisfied that cottage industries have a future, an expanding future and that the co-operative principle has a large part to play in their development”. My own impression which is a result of my tour in the Coastal Andhra districts is that there is a very vast scope for co-operative activities as well as a very great desire on the part of many an artisan to “try” co-operation. Wherever I went, with the exception of a few ignorant individuals, artisans were desirous of having co-operative societies. But the peculiar feature was that they wanted somebody to organize them. It is really quite possible even now for enthusiasts to organize co-operative societies for the textile printers of Narsapur (West Godavari District) and Masulipatam (Krishna District), the coir-makers of Muthyalapalli (West Godavari



District), the poultry-keepers and fishermen of the Kolleru lake villages, the lapidaries of Masulipatam, the dairywomen of many deltaic tracts of the Andra Districts, and several others who are now exploited by unscrupulous middlemen.

Experience in the co-operative field has shown that it is more difficult to organise producers' societies than to organise consumers' ones. It is said that this accounts for the relatively small expansion of producers' movement in America. But for India which is of a different economic system this task of organising producers' societies is inevitable in spite of all difficulties. It is gratifying to learn that the Madras Government is considering the matter of organising and developing cottage industries on co-operative lines since imports from abroad are stopped as a result of war.

Since the move to take advantage of the present situation has come, it is now necessary to take into account the following problems, on whose solution the future lines of work depend.

1. **INDUSTRIAL SURVEYS** :—The existing survey of cottage industries in our province is old and incomplete. Many important industries like dairying, poultry, and bee keeping were omitted. Moreover many industries like cement works, hand-sticks making, hosiery, and oils and paints have come into existence during recent years. And the War has brought many more. Hence a complete survey is essential.

2. **CAPITAL** :—This problem is of a varied nature as shown below :—

(a) Artisans usually borrow cash for the purchase of raw materials, etc., but are obliged to utilise it for other purposes.

(b) Credit is usually given on personal security and not on that of raw material like cotton or finished products like cloth.

(c) Capital requirements vary in amounts with each industry. For instance, an iron-safe maker or a hosier who applies machinery requires larger amounts than the village society can often afford to give on personal security.

(d) The problem of repayment is knotty. The income of the artisans is not regular but dependent on the seasonal demands for products. Again in industries like iron-safe making and bronze bell and image casting, finished products are paid for and taken delivery of only on auspicious days and so regular payment is not possible. Moreover some industries require long-term loans. Sometimes when the artisans have money on hand, the sowcar on whom they partly depend pounces on them and takes away the money, thus leaving them little to pay to the society.

3. **ORGANIZATION** :—This problem comprises the following minor problems :

(a) The artisans of a locality distrust one another so much that they want an outsider to organise them into a society. Unfortunately this ugly situation is sometimes rendered uglier by the patronizing attitude of the co-operative department.

(b) There are several minor industries like rattan work, horn and button making, which are scattered here and there. They differ from one another in many respects and yet need to be organised into one co-operative unit.

(c) The weaving industry is decentralized, but the spinning industry is almost localized. The transport of yarn to important

weaving areas like the Coastal Andhra is expensive, in consequence of which circumstance the weavers of that region are unable to compete with the South Indian weavers. Hence the spinning industry must be started on co-operative lines in the Coastal Andhra and other such regions.

(d) Two important industries—Khaddar and hand pounded rice—are rapidly developed as a result of popular sentiment, but they are running mainly on capitalistic lines. They afford a very large scope for expansion on co-operative lines.

(e) Poultry and dairying industries are exclusively carried on by women in many districts. Since the male members of the families do not take any interest in their development, some outside agency must organise them into a society.

4. **MARKETING :—**(a) Some new industries like handstick making and oils and paints have low cost of production and decent margins of profit. They require a society only for marketing their products.

(b) Certain industrial products like cloth are not thoroughly standardized in quality even in co-operative societies. Some standards must be fixed and strictly enforced.

5. **ADMINISTRATION :—**

A. *Internal.*—(a) The democratic principle of the societies usually degenerates into the principle of oligarchy. Societies are often managed by a small clique in utter disregard of the opinions of the other members, but when a crisis occurs the smaller men are victimised.

(b) There is often a tendency on the part of the industrial aristocrats of the locality to look down upon the local society as a group of rebels and to try to harm it with the aid of some black sheep.

B. *Departmental.*—(a) The artisans are under the impression that the Industries, Co-operative and Agricultural departments are indifferent to their progress. It was reported to me that some improved weaving appliances were supplied to a certain society without any instructions as to how to use them. A certain officer told me how the propaganda for the introduction of a new industry was hampered by the refusal of the concerned departments to supply him with the necessary appliances for demonstration which the artisans demanded.

(b) There seems to be a lack of co-ordination in the policies of the Development Department. For instance, as I was told, an order is placed with some artisans by the Industries or Co-operative Department but the goods produced are not taken in time by the Department for which they are meant.

(c) The Government supervising officials are often reported to have involved themselves in the politics of a society.

The above are the general problems which were placed before me by the artisans of the Coastal Andhra. Their talks disclosed a general lack of confidence in the working of the societies under existing conditions, though they were unanimous in acknowledging the suitability, of co-operation to the country. It now follows that a successful solution of these problems is the keynote of success of the producers' movement in India. This solution means a re-orientation of the industrial and co-operative policy of the country. I shall here venture to offer a few suggestions :

1. *A re-adjustment of the spheres of certain large-scale and cottage industries.*—The two largest industries in any country are food industry and clothing industry. Though

the former is larger than the latter, India has been obliged to pay greater attention to her textile industry on account of the huge drain on her purse caused by imports of foreign cloths. The ceaseless toil of the country for the past three decades has brought the situation well in hand. So it is time that India paid greater attention to her food industries.

**A. FOOD INDUSTRIES :—**Food industries like cereals, flour and confectionery are run as large-scale industries and on capitalistic lines. It has been realised now that this system has not only thrown many people out of employment but also been the indirect cause of malnutrition in the people. Popular sentiment which has recently begun to develop in favour of home-pounded rice and home-made-flour and the like, as a result of medical researches, the difficulty in importing mill machinery at present, the prohibition by the Government of production of polished rice, and the poor keeping quality of unpolished rice and its flour produced on a large-scale have favoured the development of these industries on cottage lines. Since these industries are certainly more remunerative than the khaddar spinning industry in the deltaic regions, many able bodied spinners will do well to take to them. These industries are not at present run on co-operative lines. In 1940-41 there were only two co-operative hand-pounded rice societies of importance whose annual sales were about four thousand rupees. Local societies with district federations and provincial apex bodies may be organised with advantage for these industries.

Fruit canning, pickles and jams, oil pressing, poultry, dairy and bee keeping are some other food industries fit for being carried on co-operative basis.

**B. TEXTILE INDUSTRY :—**This may be considered here for it comes only next to food industries :

(a) *Mill Yarn Handloom Weaving.*—Handloom weavers are at present under a great handicap, due the indifference of the capitalistic mill owners in the matter of yarn supply. Hence they will do well to have co-operative spinning mills for important weaving centres. Another form of co-operation in weaving is the joint ownership by about five weavers of a single power-loom. Weaving can be done by the weavers by turns every day and the rest of the day may be spent in marketing the products and so on.

(b) *Khaddar.*—The khaddar industry is now run on capitalistic lines by the A.I.S.A. and several private producers. The A.I.S.A. is over solicitous, while the private producers are unscrupulous. In its eagerness to help the artisans the A.I.S.A. is unmindful of the conditions of the textile market while the private producers do not scruple to exploit the artisans in accordance with the market conditions. Only co-operation is the best remedy for this state of things. The A.I.S.A. should transform itself gradually into a federation of co-operative societies organised separately for spinners and weavers. The artisans will then feel that the societies are their own and that they should strive to better their conditions. The popular sentiment in favour of A.I.S.A. will be an asset to the newly formed societies.

Events seem to tend towards this end. In 1930 the A.I.S.A. expressed itself in favour of decentralisation. And in 1941-42 financial difficulties pressed the A.I.S.A. to take the significant step of asking the artisans to contribute small sums towards capital. This is a helpful sign. And it is to be hoped that



co-operation will soon take the khaddar industry also into its fold.

(c) **OTHER INDUSTRIES** :—There are scores of other industries which are individually smaller than the above two industries, for instance, metal work, rope making, paper making and toy making. They are all important in their own way for they are helping to replace some factory made articles. Some of them are so small and scattered that they cannot be organised except in groups.

2. **BETTER PRODUCTION** :—(a) The people should be made to give up their mutual distrust and join hands in mutual good faith. Propaganda and education must be pursued not as routine work but as a matter of conviction. The Government, instead of evincing a supervising attitude should volunteer its services.

(b) *Capital*.—The Government should aid some societies substantially. For instance, for the promotion of co-operative spinning, the Government through the local bodies may invest capital (since the capital forthcoming from the weavers will be small) and supervise it in such a way as to enable a smooth running of the industry. Since the present Co-operative Societies Act does not admit of this State co-partnership, the Act may be amended to this effect. It need not be considered impracticable in view of the fact that the Registrar of Co-operative Societies, Madras, has induced several mills and central banks to buy shares in co-operative societies.

(c) *Production*.—Small power-driven machinery can also be used co-operatively in the case of some important industries.

3. **BETTER SALES** :—The ways and means of selling—advertisements, exhibitions, museums and the like—are not unknown. Only

they are not taken full advantage of. For example industrial museums introduced during the Congress regime are now virtually defunct. They have become merely displaying places of 'Museum pieces'. If all these means are properly adopted the outside market may be easily captured. Local unhealthy competition may be eliminated if all the artisans are enrolled as members.

4. **BETTER LIVING** :—It is a truism that despite the general absence of better living in the land, the factors conducive to its attainment are not unknown. Hence there is no need to dilate on it.

The present trend of the co-operative movement is to combine all the activities of the members. The multi-purpose society is evolved to attain this end. This type of society has been criticised of late by some people. But it has been found fairly successful in Bombay, U.P. and elsewhere. In Madras also it is being tried at Alamaru and other centres. This multi-purpose society may be constituted to combine the various activities of one large industry (as a vertical combination) or the activities of a group of small scattered industries in each locality (as a horizontal combination).

What then are the respective spheres of activity of the people and the Government towards co-operative development of cottage industries? The scope of work of the people has been too often explained by leading co-operators to need mention here. Suffice it to say that the people must have the will to elevate themselves by co-operative action. They must put heart and soul into their work and then success is theirs. Youngmen who have the necessary technical education and equipment should give the lead by starting

some new industries or improving old ones co-operatively using improved appliances like machinery as in many western countries.

But the aid which the State can render needs to be mentioned here. The Government can assist by :—

(a) Co-partnership in certain costly but essential industries for the benefit of the artisans ;

(b) Purchase of articles produced by co-operative societies ;

(c) Supply of electricity at cheap rates for industrial purposes ;

(d) Opening technical institutes as many centres for training young men since

apprenticeship is not possible under present conditions ;

(e) Giving free technical advice and new designs and patterns which the artisans may not be able to obtain otherwise.

If industries are developed on these lines there will be scope not only for employment but also for living a good and a full life.

The co-operators the world over, are hopefully rejoicing that the later part of this century will be a new age of man characterised by social co-operation. If India is to share the same hopeful joy she must justify her position by working in right earnest even from now.

## EDITORS' NOTE

THE Editors are not responsible for the views expressed by contributors or correspondents. The publication of a contribution or correspondence shall not necessarily imply the identification of the Editors with the views and opinions expressed in such contribution or correspondence. The Editors welcome proposals for articles and they should be typewritten or quite easily legible. Such contributions should be original and should contribute towards the furtherance of the cultural aspects of the subjects treated.

A stamped and addressed envelope must accompany all manuscripts, of which the return is desired in case of non-acceptance. Every care will be taken of manuscripts ; but contributors should keep copies, as the Editors can in no case be responsible for accidental loss. Photographs and original pictures sent for publication will be in the possession of the Editors.



# EXHIBITIONS

## ART INDUSTRY EXHIBITION, MADRAS

The Indian Institute of Art in Industry organised an exhibition of Posters, Showcards, Calender designs, Book illustrations, Designs for Mural paintings and specimens of type-setting and typewriting, etc., in the St. Mary's Hall, Armenian Street, Madras, during the last week of August this year.

The exhibition was representative and well arranged with great care and experience. Unlike the so-called Art Exhibitions usually held in Madras, the Hall was not overcrowded and every exhibit was displayed with advantage, with an eye for artistic display.



By now, through these exhibitions, many might have come to know the activities of the Institute which had done immense service not only to the general public but also to the *Artist, the Designer, and the Industrialist.*

Till recently no attention was paid for *designing* either by the artist or by the industrialist with the result that both have suffered and the country is miserably the poorer in Industrial and Commercial Art. As a matter of fact this ought to have been the function of the Schools of Art in India but unfortunately the Schools of Art, as they are constituted today are neither serving the country in maintaining the high traditions of art and crafts of this country, nor giving facilities to the young artists to become creative artists; from this point of view, all the Schools of Art in this Country have miserably failed in their duty. No better evidence is required to substantiate the above than to look at the Indian State Railways' Posters which have all been designed by foreign artists and many of them were printed in foreign countries, when so much local talent was available every where in the country. With a view to bring this miserable position to the notice of the public and the authorities concerned the present editors of SILPI organised an Exhibition of Posters collected from various countries from abroad in Madras in 1937 which was the first of its kind in our Country. The Exhibition was well representative having on show *Posters* from India, Germany, Paris, Italy, Japan, China, U.S.A. and all the posters of all the Railways in India and a few specimens of Posters, show-cards, etc., from the \* Madras and Lucknow Schools of Art. The educative value of this exhibition was appreciated both by the press and the public.

---

\* The author was conducting a Commercial Art Class in the Madras School of Arts in 1932 and continued it for a couple of years with great difficulty since the authorities were not happy over it. Most of the Commercial Artists who occupy good positions today in the city were students of that period.





What was not achieved for decades in the Art Schools was achieved by the Institute of Art in Industry in less than a decade and the reason is obvious—none of our Art Schools paid any attention to the growing needs of modern trends of civilization and the industrial age. Better late than never, a powerful organisation has taken up this problem and made a very good beginning by bringing together the Industrialist, the Artist and the Consumer under its fold—each cooperating with the other.

Coming back to the exhibition under review, for the second time within ten years Madras had an opportunity to witness an exhibition of Art applied to Industry. There were about 350 selected exhibits from the 1946 competition, comprising of Posters, Press layouts, show-cards, designs for calenders, book covers, textiles, mural paintings, etc., and also a few designs of interior decoration, type-setting and type-writing, etc.

Among the Poster designs most of them were confined to Textile Industry which almost gave an impression that the whole show was arranged by the Textile Board of Trade or some similar institution sponsored by the magnates in Textile Industry. Nevertheless, the standard of these Posters was far above the previous

years. Renowned artists like O. C. Gangoly, participated in the competition and gave an impetus to young artists. Except a few designs the rest were confined to Indian Colour theme in textiles. This is a very healthy sign that our designers have realised that cheap imitation of colour scheme and pattern of Europe and America does not pay on account of their unsuitability to our standards and tastes.

Some of the designs for Press, lay-outs and book illustration were exceedingly good and promises great future for artists to keep their palette wet. The interior decoration section was rather poor and required more attention. We suggest that in future exhibitions the Institute should get some good photographs from foreign countries and exhibit them for the benefit of our designers. We feel that without proper interior decoration many of our handicrafts would not thrive. Mural painting section also was poorly represented and some of the specimens exhibited under Murals were wash drawings and unsuitable for Murals. Book illustrations were not bad but could not be commended. Press layouts were very interesting and attractive and showed great improvement and the effects of this improvement are already noticeable in many Provincial Newspapers. Typography and type-writing are poorly represented and we wish more of these were exhibited as we feel that the standard in type-writing has fallen considerably low in recent years. On the whole the exhibition was a great success in Madras. The Hon'ble Minister for Industries opened the exhibition which attracted large crowds every day. We desire the Institute to send such exhibitions more often, every one confining to a few lines of applied art and conduct lectures, where the applicability of Art for Industrial purposes can be explained in detail, as exhibitions of this kind require wide and constant publicity.

Within the few years from its inception the Indian Institute of Art in Industry had contributed much to the growth of applied Art on Indian Lines. They organise exhibitions regularly and award handsome prizes to good designs. In addition, they have a publicity department, which besides issuing periodical bulletins publish a finely got up magazine, in which well written articles are well featured. So much so, the Institute has been systematically giving the fillip necessary for the advancement of Industrial Art in our country. We suggest that



*A Design for Mural Painting*

*By Manohara Joshi*

the future exhibitions may be given more and wide publicity to attract the latent talents of our country.

“Chinni.”

### AN ART FESTIVAL AT SANTINIKETAN

An art and crafts celebration was solemnized at the Kalimohan Prangana in Sriniketan on the 17th September under the chairmanship of Pandit Kshitimohan Sen Shastri.

The development of crafts in its multifarious forms is one of the chief aims of independent India. If this aim is to become a sound realisation, then our aesthetic efforts have to find a true place in our every day life and in relation to our daily necessities of life. Every one present in the function felt the truth of these statements.

The function began with a procession of artists and craftsmen carrying various tools of their arts and crafts. They ceremoniously entered the celebration precincts followed by a recital of hymns addressed to the world-creator Vishvakarma by Pandit Kshitimohan Sen. The chief *motif* of these hymns is expressed in the words:

*Shilpani Shamsanti Devashilpani* which means, “All our art and crafts creations are like hymns dedicated to the Divine Creation.”

The singing of a few well-known songs of the Poet added to the solemnity of the occasion.

Finally, the Arts and Crafts Exhibition was opened by Shri Nandalal Bose. (*Translated by Dr. S. M. Ali*).

### ART EXHIBITION AT ADYAR, MADRAS

In connection with the Besant Centenary celebrations at ‘Kalakshetra’ Adyar the Committee organised an exhibition of paintings and crafts.

The exhibition was opened by Prof. O. C. Gangoly on the 1st of October 1947, the Centenary birthday of late Dr. BESANT and was kept open for a week. The exhibition was very tastefully arranged in “Damodar Gardens” allotting a room for each different artist. The rooms were not crowded as only very selected pictures were hung and each picture was given a proper setting so that every one of them may properly be studied and appreciated.

Paintings of Nandalal Bose, D. P. Roy Chowdhury, Manshi De, Promod Chatterji, Madhava Menon and a few other artists working in *Kalakshetra* were on show. The paintings of Nandalal Bose were from the collection of Prof O. C. Gangoly and a few copies of Nandalal, Abanindranath, etc., mounted in the Tibetan Banner





Poster By O. U. Ganguly

style were exhibited in the main hall. Among the exhibits in this hall Sabari's series were the only originals, but they were not the best specimens of Nandalal's work. Those who had known this master by his earlier works as second only to Abanindranath his *guru* and who was once exalted as even greater than his *guru* for his mythological subjects painted in the most unique style it was rather a disappointment. For some time past Nandalal has been experimenting with his brush and palette and some of them proved a poor imitation of Western Artists. The other copies of some of the master-pieces of Abanindranath, Nandalal and others were out-modelled by over a decade and as such suffered in comparison with paintings of more recent days.

In another room there were seven of D. P. Roy Chowdhury's paintings which were very conspicuous by their mounting and framing. Of the seven paintings

exhibited by him one notices seven different styles and it is difficult to make out that all of them were painted by one and the same artist, unless by looking at the labels.

In another small room were exhibited Madhava Menon's six old paintings. Readers of 'Silpi' are familiar with Menon's work, as a special article on his work with a few illustrations was published in Vol. I No. 10, May 1947. Coming to another room one sees Manshi De's paintings. A dozen of them were exhibited in the room giving plenty of opportunity to the visitor to enjoy. Every one of them was a piece of Art. Manshi De requires no introduction. He has travelled more than once as a real artist from Himalayas to Cape Camorin painting and selling pictures and making acquaintances with rich and poor lovers of art. He has been exhibiting his work regularly in every exhibition in India and abroad and in every exhibition he introduces a new series. The dozen pictures that he exhibited in this exhibition are undoubtedly the best in the exhibition from every point of view. He is also an experimentalist and happily his experiments are on the progressive side. Among the rest there were Promod Chaterji's old pictures and some pictures by some artists working in *Kalakshetra*.

In the crafts section there were many silk *sarīs* specially designed and woven in *Kalakshetra*. Every one of them was a thing of beauty and both the design and colour scheme were of a high order though both were adapted from the old well known patterns of Madura and Conjeevaram. More than the design, the depth and shade of dye were the most pleasing. The real Indian yellow, orange, red and green that were used by the old Madura and Conjeevaram silk dyers has become extinct and in its place cheap and vulgar shades of those colours are found in modern textiles. The dignity and grandeur of old *Karnataka sari* has waned on account of these unholy shades which have been introduced by the foreign dye manufacturers.

The exhibition gave great scope to lovers and admirers of art to see calmly each painting in its proper perspective and appreciate it in all its aspects, and we congratulate the organisers for having given a lead in the art of organising and arranging an Art Exhibition with the main idea of educating people and not as a cheap resort for public entertainment. "Chinni."





# BOOK REVIEWS

*FREEDOM COME: By Harindranath Chattopadhyaya.*  
*Decorations by:—K. K. Hebbar. Published by:—*  
*Nalanda Publications, Post Box No. 1353, Bombay.*  
*Price Re. 0-12-0.*

The name of Harindranath is too well known to all, as a talented poet, whose compositions have uniformly evoked admiration. In this small publication, the poet has appropriately dealt with the burning topic of the day—the achievement of our country's freedom. Written in varying metres, the poem reads well and narrates at length the sacrifice that the long chain of martyrs have done for the emancipation of our country. The long poem closes well with the prayer that;

“ . . . We shall see and reunite the mother  
 Inseparable, brother one with brother,  
 One India, one nation and one Soul.”

The grandeur of the poem is much enhanced by the fine pen and ink sketches of Mr. Hebbar especially the one, wherein the Mother India is portrayed as suckling her twin children—the Hindu and the Moslem. It is highly suggestive and at the same time symbolic of the Hindu-Muslim unity for which the great leaders of our country earned so much gave their all to achieve it.  
 “Teeyennes.”

*PICTURES AND PEN PICTURES, Author*  
*P. V. Pathy. Publishers: Tamil Nad Publications.*  
*Price Rs. 5.*

This is a well got up small but interesting booklet printed on superior paper with numerous illustrative photos. Mr. Pathy leads us through almost all the important cities in India—ancient, modern and historical. The photographs and the narrative appeal to the heart of the reader. To those who had already visited these places the narrative would appear to be voicing forth their own impressions. Mr. Pathy starts

from the Northern most point comes down to the plains, travels from the historic Somnath of the west to the holy city of Benares in the east through Muttra, Brindavan and Gokul, then down South to the home of the Andhras from where he reaches the Cape through Madras and Kanchi. The narrative contains legendary details, historical anecdotes and the modern position of the ruins, cities and citadels that are brought before our eyes through the various photographs. The value of the book would certainly have been enhanced had colour blocks been used to depict the grandeur of the Mogul Court. Many trivial spelling mistakes found right through the book evince lack of strict proof correction. Publication of yet another booklet bringing out the beauty of our vast colourful countryside would complete the present work.  
 “Vasan.”

*THE DANCE OF DUST, By Krishna Srinivas.*  
*Published by:—Ramnath Publications, 188, Royapettah High Road, Madras, 14. Price Rs. 3-12-0.*

Young Mr. Srinivas has successfully attempted to write tilting lyrics and the publication under review contains three well written and thought-provoking poems—“The Dance of Dust” and “Music of the Soul”, and “Quest” written in blank verse. The style is exquisite and there is warmth in the emotional feelings of the poet, which is stamped with the stoic-philosophic outlook which is the blood of every Indian. This is more particularly felt in the poem “Quest”. A perusal of these poems is certain to reveal the highly developed sense of poetic beauty that the author possesses and also exhibit a very happy and harmonious blending of the Western materialistic outlook co-mingled with “Karma” impregnated disposition of the East. The author is quite young and it is hoped that he will, in the years to come, continue to give more expressions of the poetic erudition and enrich the anthology of Indian written English poetry.  
 “T. N. S.”

*REPORT OF THE CONFERENCE ON PACKAGING,  
Held at 23 Knightsbridge, S.W.1., on 29 November  
1946 (The Council of Industrial Design; Tilbury  
House, Petty France, LONDON S.W.1.).*

When one receives a railway parcel, or a postal parcel, or any kind of parcel that has been damaged in transit, the immediate reaction is one of considerable annoyance and an unspoken adverse comment on the sender and the conveying agents at doing their job so poorly. On the other hand, when a parcel arrives at its destination in perfect condition and the contents is as neat and fresh as when it left the sender, it gives immense delight and one may sometimes spare a kind thought for those who have taken the trouble to pack so that the parcel may not get damaged. These, however, are usually transitory feelings and the lay public has probably little knowledge of all the forethought that goes in the proper packaging of goods. The fact that a Conference was held on the subject of proper packaging during which papers were read on the various aspects of this—as it is revealed—very difficult as well as very important subject, shows that industry is becoming more and more concerned with the safe delivery of its goods to the consumer.

Again, to the layman, the vast ramifications of the subject of proper packaging are quite unknown, and only some idea of what this work entails can be gathered from the different papers read at the Conference. The range of discussion covered the meaning of packaging, its utility, the appearance of packages and containers, their sales, prestige, and advertising value, and all the scientific research involved in solving the many problems of firms sending their goods not only throughout their own country but abroad. The scientific research deals with the nature of the goods to be sent, what their reaction will be to various climatic conditions bringing in their wake such things as insects and fungi and general deterioration. Then science studies what materials may be used to protect every sort of commodity and, finally, how best they can be transported so as to withstand rough handling, long possible exposure to varying climates, changes from land to sea, rain, sun, moisture, and organic changes.

That is the technical aspect that does not concern itself with appearance; it is in this latter that the designer comes in. The designer has to work in collaboration not only with the scientific researchist, with the manufacturer, the packers, but with the salesmen and buyers so that he may evolve a container that will appeal to the public, make the trade mark of the goods easily recognizable, and be sensible and strong enough to stand transport and preserve the goods in a perfect condition. None of these things are easy, but they are worthwhile, for it is no good ordering and receiving a bottle of the finest perfume, the latest camera and equipment, delicious fruit from some other country, or a length of beautiful cloth if they arrive unfit for use. As it is no use blaming the conveying authorities for lack of care, the best recourse is to pack the goods properly at their very source. It is interesting to note that the last war forced the proper study of packaging on the Government of Great Britain as it had never done before and the results of this study are now available to industrialists, for the benefit of the goods and of the consuming public. A very great deal of unpleasant correspondence would be avoided if all firms took the trouble to spare the added expense and have their goods packed by competent people who knew all the requirements of the work.

This booklet on the Conference on Packaging has an enlightening section on the many wrong ways of packing that cause damage to goods in transit, and on especially studied packing that ensures safe arrival. “M. H.”

*ILLUSTRATED NOTES ON TECHNICAL  
PACKING AND PACKAGING AND ON THE  
DESIGN OF SALES PACKAGING; Reprinted from  
the Full Report of the Conference on Packaging held  
in London in November 1946 (The Council of Industrial  
Design; Tilbury House, Petty France, LONDON  
S.W.1.).*

As the title implies, this pamphlet is a reprint of the illustrated section of the Report on the Conference on Packaging. The extended notes accompanying every photograph are most informative and lead the mind to the subject of improving this important branch of industry. It also stimulates an interest in the avoidance of wastage through faulty packing. “M. H.”



# NOTES ON PLATES

“SPRING”

Photo Off-set Frontise-piece  
JAPANESE ARTIST.

The original is a silk painting measuring 11" × 10" and it is a typical specimen of Japanese wash technique. Generally the Chinese and the Japanese artists paint directly on white silk specially made for this purpose. These pictures, are usually in the form of *kakimono* hanging paintings, or *makimono*, horizontal-scrolls, which are sometimes of immense length. But some of the first Japanese paintings are in the form of screens, usually six-fold; these if in colours, are generally on a gold or silver ground. There are also paintings on sliding panels and framed pictures.

The Japanese do not hang any thing on their walls or panels. They keep their rooms perfectly clean and empty but always keep one corner in their reception room, a sort of alcove called the *tokonoma* which is reserved for exhibiting a painting—may be a *kakemono* or a framed picture, a well-arranged flower-vase and a porcelain piece or some curio. It is here a visitor is entertained. So, each house-hold takes great care in arranging all these in the *tokonoma*—almost every week the flowers have to be changed along with the flower-vase, the curios and the paintings and all these should be in accordance with the season. So each house-hold keeps a few *kakemono* and a number of these small paintings mounted on blocks so that whenever one of them is required for putting it in the *tokonoma* it may be taken out and put in a lacquered frame for that purpose. Many of the master-pieces are reduced to this size and printed in photo-offset or collotype process and sold for the benefit of middle class art admirers who cannot afford to buy some originals.

“Spring” is a beautiful picture, simple in theme and rich in pattern. The lonely bird on a small branch and

little foliage to identify the tree is all that is seen in it. To many who are not familiar with the Chinese and the Japanese paintings it may give an impression that the picture is a portion cut out of a large painting. The Japanese lay stress only on the main theme and try to express it in the simplest possible manner with the minimum details avoiding all unnecessary details. Hence we notice a small branch, a few leaves and a small bird against clear background as if a close-up is made in the enlarging camera from a too-crowded negative. The composition of the picture including the seal of the artist and its signature all put together, is well balanced.

It is only the Japanese and the Chinese artists that use a seal and sign their names on paintings. To use the seal and sign also form a part of composition and has to be done very tastefully. Invariably they use red ink for their seals and sign their names in ink with a brush and every stroke of it is as important as the ones made in the painting. The colour scheme is very pleasing and significant of “Spring”.

“DEVI”

Wood-carving Two-colour

K. THANIKACHALAM.

Though South India is rightly famous for her marvellous bronze images, she is equally well up in replicas of Icons in other media also, specially in wood and clay. Reproduced in this issue, is a photograph of a fine sculptural piece of “Devi”. The image was carved in rosewood measuring about 10 inches by K. Thanikachalam when he was a student of the School of Arts and Crafts, Madras. The carving is exquisite and conforms well up to the iconographical *lakshanas* that are attributed to “Devi”.



It looks almost like a bronze image and the artist has taken good care to elaborately work the “*Pithambaram*” and “*Kreetam*” of the Devi, which requires considerable skill and dexterity. Workmen of this kind are still among us but what we feel is that they do not get the encouragement they deserve nowadays. If our ancient art is to survive, it should be our foremost duty to help such artisans to carry on their particular craft. They should also be properly patronized by the State and the art-lovers of our country.

“*HIMALAYA*”

Photo Off-set

NICHOLAS ROERICH.

Our readers are quite familiar with Nicholas Roerich, whose contributions are regularly published in the *SILPI* ever since its inception. But it may be that very few of us would have known about this great mystic seer and philosopher, who, though a Russian by birth has adopted this country and has practically become a ‘*karma Yogi*’ having absorbed the main principles of our ancient and hoary culture. Elsewhere, in this issue, there is also a well-written article on this great personality.

Nicholas Roerich has enriched the Art culture of the world by his innumerable paintings through which he has almost created new canons of the depiction of Nature. Though he does not belong to any particular school of Art tradition, he has by dexterity of his brush, created a new technique which is symbolic of a happy and harmonious blending of the mysticism of the East and the perfect visualism of the West. His paintings breathe an air of *Maya* but yet the thrill and throb of life is felt in them.

Though his earlier paintings related to Secular and Catholic art, after his retirement in the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas near Kulu, Roerich’s love has been to portray the majestic and never satiating grandeur of the *Himachala* through his paintings. Himalayas was ever a theme of absorbing interest to the long line of geniuses in Art and Literature. From the *Puranic* days, when the sages made Parvati—the daughter of Himalayas, the Parvataraja to marry Lord Siva, till the charm and hue of Himalayas were the subject-matter for masterpieces in ancient and medieval Literature and Art—So much so, the great mountain was almost defied and is

considered as a minor divinity in the great Hindu Pantheon of Gods and Goddesses. It has also been the abode of immense spiritualism as it has attracted great thinkers like Sri Sankara and Sri Ramanuja to spend a good part of their lives there to realise the mysticism of life.

The same magnetic power may be said to be responsible for attracting Nicholas Roerich too to this great centre of culture. In the painting now published, we are presented with one of the grandest and most magnificent panorama of snow-clad mountains that one often sees in the Himalayas. The painting, though it appears at first sight, as simple, is sure to touch the inner feelings as one sees it more minutely and seriously. To one who deeply contemplated on this, it will suggest the symbolic existence of the great Lord of the mountains, Siva, who is supposed to live there eternally. The whiteness suggests purity—*Satyam* amidst the complete solemnity of *Sivam*, which combines to symbolise *Subham*.

“*BOATMEN*”

Woodcut

L. M. SEN, A.R.C.A.

Readers of “*SILPI*” are already familiar with the fine wood-cuts of Mr. Sen. In this picture the artist has brought effectively the force of contrast between the dark coloured boat and the foliage in the background and the thinly coloured waterfront and the slightly cloud-laden sky beyond. As such there is a harmonious play of black and white, which endows the subject with the requisite depth and strength to the theme of the wood-cut.

“*MALABAR VILLAGE*”

Wood-cut

F. H. RAULEDER.

In the August 1947 issue of the “*SILPI*”, we published a wood-cut quite similar to the above one, in which a typical Malabar scene with its inevitable backwater and the cocoanut trees were well depicted. This wood-cut may be considered as a companion one to the other, for in this we see a street scene just away from the waterfront. Yet this too is quite typical of Malabar. Its naturalness is enhanced by the commonly seen rickshaw, so typical of the Malabar towns.

We need not add much to the artistic genius of Mr. Rauleder, as we have already mentioned about him in our previous issues.

DHAKSHI NUDALIA  
Date \_\_\_\_\_  
LIBRARY



"LAST OFFERING"

Asit K. HALDER